

COURT CULTURE
IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference

STUDIES IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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COURT CULTURE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference

Edited by

Catherine Cubitt



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Preface

This volume results from a conference held in July 1998 on ‘Alcuin and Court Culture’, the first in a regular series held at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York intended to commemorate Alcuin in his home town. A number of early medievalists at the University—myself, Elizabeth Tyler, Sid Bradley, and the late Jim Lang—felt that it was fully time that York’s most illustrious and influential son was remembered in the city where he grew up and to which he remained deeply attached even after his final departure for the Carolingian court. To honour Alcuin as he deserved, conferences on wide-ranging topics, important themes in the study of the early Middle Ages, were appropriate, and the first to be chosen was the topic of court culture, a subject of direct relevance to the life of Alcuin. The organizers wished to bring together a number of disciplines as a suitable way to remember Alcuin’s own wide-ranging interests and to reflect the commitment to interdisciplinary research on the part of the Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of York. The papers brought together here cover aspects of court culture—art history, literature, historical and archaeological approaches—in Europe and in Byzantium, chiefly focussing on the eighth and ninth centuries. The papers were intended to reflect broadly Alcuin’s own age and milieu but were not too overly constrained by these bounds. We hoped that the range of papers would enable readers to make comparisons and connections between the different regions studied.

All the articles in this volume were first given as conference papers in York with the exception of Lyn Rodley’s ‘The Byzantine Court and Byzantine Art’, which was specially commissioned to extend the range of the volume, and Donald Bullough’s study of Alcuin’s career between 793 and 796, his period of service at the Carolingian court (taken from Professor Bullough’s forthcoming monograph). Professor Bullough gave the keynote address at the conference on Charlemagne’s court library; it was a great honour to have so distinguished an Alcuin scholar inaugurate the conference in this way. His death, after this volume went to press, is an irreparable loss to early medieval studies. His lively presence, trenchant but always generous criticism, and unrivalled erudition which made a memorable contribution to the conference itself will be sorely missed.

Catherine Cubitt

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>AIRN</i> | <i>Acta Institutum Romanum Norvegiae</i> |
| CFHB | Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantiae |
| CCCM | Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis |
| CCSL | Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina |
| CSHB | Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae |
| CSEL | Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum |
| <i>DOP</i> | <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> |
| EETS | Early English Text Society |
| OS | Original Series |
| SS | Supplementary Series |
| <i>JÖB</i> | <i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i> |
| MGH | Monumenta Germaniae Historica |
| Cap. | Capitularia |
| Dip. | Diplomata Karolinorum |
| Epp. | Epistolae |
| Fontes | Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae Historicis separatim editi |
| Poet. | Poetae Latini medii aevi |
| SRG | Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi |
| SRL | Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX |
| SRM | Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum |
| SS | Scriptores in folio |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| <i>ODB</i> | <i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , ed. by A. P. Kazhdan (Oxford, 1991) |
| <i>PG</i> | <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> |
| <i>PL</i> | <i>Patrologiae Latina</i> |
| <i>Settimane</i> | <i>Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo</i> |

Introduction

CATHERINE CUBITT

Court culture is now a lively topic of research in all periods, its importance and popularity seen in numerous publications and even in the establishment of a Society for Court Studies with its own journal.¹ This flowering of interest reflects a recognition not only of the centrality of the court but also its complexity as a social, political, and cultural institution. No longer perceived as the primitive forerunner of the bureaucracies of the modern state, royal and noble courts were multifaceted institutions whose role in the kingdom was not limited to political manoeuvring and administration. Court studies now not only reflect the diversity of activities encompassed by aulic life but also recognize that the court was a social entity in its own right with its own behavioural norms and culture.

The articles gathered together in this volume reflect the diversity and range of current interest in court culture in the early Middle Ages. They bring together historical approaches to court society and royal government (Nelson, Innes, Bullough, Pratt, Campbell, and Morris) and literary, archaeological, and art historical studies (Irvine, Lobbedey, Nees, Osborne, and Rodley) in eighth- to tenth-century England, Francia, papal Rome, and Byzantium. The haphazard survival of evidence from the period means that early medieval court culture is unevenly recorded. For Carolingian courts a wealth of literary and manuscript evidence survives while for contemporary Anglo-Saxon

¹ Valuable reviews of the historiography of the study of courts are contained in John Adamson, 'The Making of the Ancien-Régime Court 1500–1700', in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500–1750*, ed. by Adamson (London, 1999), pp. 7–41, and Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern Court* (Amsterdam, [1994]), pp. 1–34. The Society for Court Studies was founded in 1995 and runs regular seminars and conferences (<http://www.courtstudies.com>). Its journal is entitled *The Court Historian*.

courts the literary evidence is more limited, restricted primarily to Asser's biography of Alfred and the King's translations. Yet, the possibility exists uniquely in Anglo-Saxon England of listening to the meditations of the King himself. Byzantine sources are immeasurably fuller in their treatment of dress, ritual, and etiquette than western accounts. Inevitably, one is rarely able to compare like with like but the juxtaposition of different aspects of court culture from different regions is suggestive, not only of influence from one court to another, but also of what the silences in the evidential record may conceal. This introduction aims to give an overview of scholarship on early medieval court culture, integrating within it the essays contained in this volume.

A seminal figure in the transformation of court studies in all historical periods is Norbert Elias whose study of the court of Louis XIV examined the nature of court society itself and its role in the diffusion of behavioural norms.² Elias argued that the court was the means by which kings could control their elites, demanding constant attendance and concomitant expenditure on ostentatious display. The court was the centre for competition for royal favour and for prestige and status. Courtly etiquette and display were far from being of marginal historical interest but were instruments of royal power, necessary to maintain and enhance distinctions in rank. The royal court was a social entity in its own right with its own rules of conduct and discourse, and its influence pervaded the kingdom and propagated new rules for behaviour.³ Elias developed new ways of thinking about courts and central power, and his insights have been fruitfully taken up by scholars of all periods. But his view of the court and its role in society and government have not met with universal agreement, especially amongst early modernists, and has generated controversy which itself has been invigorating to the study of the court.⁴

New ways of looking at the court have emerged which stress its polyfocal nature, its political ambivalence, and its role in external politics.⁵ Elias concentrated on the court as a manifestation of royal power over the nobility. But scholars now see the court not as purely the place where kings disposed of patronage to their anxious subjects but as a meeting place for kings and nobles, needed as much by the kings as by the nobility. Courts were double-edged instruments of royal power, centres not only of royal fidelity but also of disloyal conspiracy. Early modernists also counsel against seeing the court as a royal monolith but instead emphasize the plurality of courts within a kingdom, a network of interrelated noble and royal centres. Elias's analysis has also been criticized for its neglect of the external dimension of courtly display and for treating royal courts as though their only function was within the kingdom. Courts were rather international

² N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie*, Soziologische Texte, 54 (Berlin, 1969), published in England as *The Court Society*, trans. E. Jephcott (Oxford, 1983).

³ Duindam, *Myths of Power*, pp. 13–22, gives a useful summary of Elias's view of the court.

⁴ See the critiques of Duindam, *Myths of Power*, and by Adamson, 'The Making', pp. 7–41.

⁵ Adamson, 'The Making', pp. 7–41.

affairs, their magnificent display aimed at those in other kingdoms, centres of international rivalry, envy, and emulation. A recent volume has declared that a new court history has emerged among early modernists, with methodological approaches which focus less narrowly on the court as a stage in the development of bureaucracy and as an instrument of absolutist government.⁶

The study of early medieval court culture has traditionally been focussed in three main areas: constitutional history, archaeological study of palaces, and intellectual and art historical interest in the court patronage of the arts. These approaches have resulted in much ground-breaking work. Josef Fleckenstein, for example, rigorously examined the evidence for the chapels and chanceries of the Carolingian and Ottonian rulers, uncovering the histories of their officials.⁷ Study of the chancery has underlined the role of the court in the development of government, seen, for example, in work on the papacy where research on the papal chancery has by far outweighed studies of the papal curia as a court.⁸ Research on the Anglo-Saxon royal court has tended to concentrate on this issue. In England, the politics of the court have also been illuminatingly studied by Keynes and Stafford, revealing the rapid changes of court life and the interplay between king and nobility.⁹ The political and constitutional life of those at early medieval courts, royal officials, and secular and religious courtiers has received attention. The palaces and royal residences too have been analysed with important studies of the significance of royal itineration.¹⁰ Archaeologists have excavated the buried remains of royal residences and sought to explicate what little remains above ground of palaces such as

⁶ Adamson, 'The Making', pp. 39–41.

⁷ Josef Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, vol. I, *Grundlegung: Die karolingische Hofkapelle*, vol. II, *Die Hofkapelle im Rahmen der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche*, Schriften der MGH, 16.1 and 2 (Stuttgart, 1959–66).

⁸ See, for example, L. Santifaller, *Saggio di un elenco dei funzionari impiegati e scrittori della cancelleria pontificia dall'inizio all'anno 1099*, 2 parts (Rome, 1940), and T. F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984). See the critique of this constitutionally centred research by Marios Costambeys, 'Property, Ideology, and the Territorial Power of the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages', *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 367–96 (pp. 389–96), and John Osborne, 'Papal Court Culture during the Pontificate of Zacharias (AD 741–52)', below.

⁹ Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978–1016: A Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), and Pauline Stafford, 'The Reign of Aethelred II, a Study on the Limitations on Royal Policy and Action', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from a Millenary Conference*, ed. by D. Hill, *British Archaeological Reports*, British Series, 59 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 15–46.

¹⁰ See, for example, E. Ewig, 'Résidence et capitale pendant le haut Moyen Ages', *Revue historique*, 230 (1963), 25–72; Josiane Barbier, 'Le système palatial franc: genèse et fonctionnement dans le nord-ouest du regnum', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 148 (1990), 245–99.

Aachen.¹¹ The survival of magnificent and luxurious artefacts, such as Charlemagne's court school manuscripts, have rather like the extant remains of palaces demanded and received scholarly analysis of their inspiration and creation.

In recent years, scholars have begun to integrate these approaches and to bring together the study of different facets of court life to understand the nature of the court itself. A watershed here was the publication in 1981 of a book edited by Margaret Gibson and Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*.¹² This brought together into one volume studies, for example, of the politics of the period, of the economic significance of royal itineration, of the patronage of the arts, and of the intellectual debate over predestinarianism at Charles the Bald's court. Through these juxtapositions, it was possible to see the interconnections between political, economic, and intellectual and artistic life in an early medieval court. The flourishing nature of court studies is also reflected in a collection of essays entitled *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* which appeared in 1997. This too chose to combine articles on material and intellectual cultures and on ritual and rhetoric with studies of the economics of court life and its social constitution. Its publication marked the recognition that court culture was a subject in its own right and that courts could be studied in the round rather than dissected between different disciplines and subject interests. The court as an instrument of royal government should not be detached from its social world, nor should the art works which resulted from it be divorced from the costumes and ceremonies of which they were part.¹³

A further impetus to the development of court studies in the European early Middle Ages has been research into the nobility which brought the royal court into the foreground as the meeting place of kings and nobles. This can be seen, for example, in numerous articles by Stuart Airlie who has shown how the court not only bonded the king and his aristocracy but also created ties of interest and friendship among courtiers, and through both sets of links worked to extend royal influence into the provinces.¹⁴

¹¹ See Uwe Lobbedey, 'Carolingian Royal Palaces: The State of Research from an Architectural Historian's Viewpoint', below, for bibliography on the remains of the palace at Aachen.

¹² The volume was the result of a conference held in 1979: *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, Oxford, British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 101, 2nd edn, 1990, published by Variorum, Aldershot.

¹³ *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. by Henry Maguire (Washington, DC, 1997), and see esp. the introduction pp. vii–viii (p. viii).

¹⁴ S. Airlie, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*, ed. by Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–204, and Airlie, 'The Palace of Memory: The Carolingian Court as Political Centre', in *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, ed. by S. Rees-Jones, R. Marks, and A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 1–20. See too the essays by Stuart Airlie, 'Semper fideles? Loyauté envers les Carolingiens comme constituant de l'identité aristocratique', Janet Nelson, 'La cour impériale de Charlemagne', and Thomas Zotz,

Relations between king and nobility are one strand in the writings of Janet Nelson, the co-editor of *Charles the Bald*, whose work has highlighted the royal court as a subject of research. Nelson's interest in ritual and consensus, politics and ideology has made the court central to her research on Carolingian politics. Her use of historical sociology and the ideas of Weber and Elias has opened up many issues in the role and function of early medieval courts, particularly the royal Carolingian court.¹⁵ These studies have been influential particularly upon Carolingian scholars, amongst whom there is now some consensus about the centrality of the court in the government of the early medieval state and its role in the creation and maintenance of bonds of fidelity between kings and nobles.

Court culture is a flourishing area of research amongst early medievalists. Further, many of Elias's insights have proved fruitful: for example, his discussion of rivalry in the royal court which shows how kings could use divide-and-rule tactics to strengthen their hold over their subjects sheds light on the combination of camaraderie and back-biting seen in Carolingian court poetry. This reveals an edgy sphere of intellectual competition and one-upmanship. Poems combine lavish flattery of Charlemagne with snide comments about the merits of other members of the royal court.¹⁶ It is not difficult to see in this mix of obsequiousness and personal abuse the role of the monarch in fostering attention upon himself and his favours and promoting competition for these.

'Le palais et les élites dans le royaume de Germanie', in *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (du début du IXe aux environs de 920)*, ed. by R. Le Jan (Lille, 1998), pp. 129–43, 177–91, 233–47.

¹⁵ See Nelson's opening remarks in her paper here, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?'. J. L. Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual', in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. by David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 137–80, reprinted in her collected papers, *The Frankish World 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 99–131, esp. at 120–24; Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 211–51, esp. at pp. 219–22; Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 41–50; Nelson, 'La cour impériale'; Nelson, 'Aachen as a Place of Power', in *Topographies of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by M. de Jong and F. Theuws (Leiden, 2001), pp. 217–41. Elias's ideas have also been taken up with enthusiasm with regard to the High Middle Ages by C. S. Jaeger in *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985) and *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994).

¹⁶ See, for example, the poems of Peter of Pisa, Paul the Deacon, Angilbert, Theodulf, and Alcuin usefully edited and translated in Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 83–89, 113–21, 151–63. For an important redating of the circular poems by Angilbert, Theodulf, and Alcuin see Donald Bullough, 'Unsettled at Aachen: Alcuin between Frankfurt and Tours', below, and see the discussion by Nelson of flying, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?', below.

The role of the court in the diffusion of behavioural norms within the kingdom is a significant function of the early medieval court, a theme highlighted by many of the papers in this volume.¹⁷ The influence of Elias here prompted enquiry into the nature of royal religious beliefs, and into the court as a theatre for the personal piety of the king and its role in spreading new religious norms. Charlemagne and Louis the Pious set in motion major religious reforms in attempts to bring about a wholesale reformation of society and unite into one Christian empire their diverse subjects.¹⁸ In ninth-century England, Alfred the Great followed suit, placing his emphasis more exclusively on the role of education in the Christian renewal of his kingdom. The contemporary biographies of all three are at pains to describe the exemplary devotions of their subjects, accounts which show the King at prayer, in meditative reading, and in formal religious services in the setting of his court.¹⁹ Asser also mentions Alfred's secret devotions which paradoxically emphasize the public nature of his usual religious routine.²⁰ His desire to surround himself with learned clerics and to spend time with them in the pursuit of wisdom could not have been missed by the secular members of his court. Every royal palace had a chapel, not all as magnificent as the chapel at Aachen where Charlemagne's presence must have infused the whole environment even in his absence.²¹

Personal piety and the religious renewal of the kingdom could not be separated and the court was where the two met in the king's person and in the discussion of his entourage.²² Study of the *Admonitio Generalis*, Charlemagne's great religious manifesto, the *Libri Carolini*, and writings on Adoptionism, his forays into theological controversy, have not only identified the work of individual scholars—Alcuin and Theodulf—but effectively revealed the element of court discussion in their creation.²³ Asser's

¹⁷ Bullough, 'Unsettled at Aachen'; Nelson, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?'; Matthew Innes, "'A Place of Discipline': Carolingian Courts and Aristocratic Youth'; and David Pratt, 'Persuasion and Invention at the Court of King Alfred the Great'.

¹⁸ See the useful survey in Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751–987* (London, 1983), pp. 106–39, and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 181–303.

¹⁹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 23, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRG, 25 (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 30–32.

²⁰ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, *Together with the Annals of St Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson, new imp. (Oxford, 1959), cc. 24, 74, 76–79, 87–93, 99.

²¹ Ross Samson, 'Carolingian Palaces and the Poverty of Ideology', in *Meaningful Architecture: Social Interpretation of Buildings*, ed. by M. Locock (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 99–131.

²² See Roger Collins, 'Charlemagne and His Critics (814–829)', in *La royauté et les élites*, ed. by Le Jan, pp. 193–211, on this and the tensions which it caused.

²³ On Charlemagne's reforms, see D. A. Bullough, 'Aula Renovata: The Carolingian Court before the Aachen Palace', and 'Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology, and the Carolingian Age', in his *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), pp.

description of Alfred's intimate and frequent conversations with his band of royal helpers makes it unlikely that the sole inspiration for his educational reforms was the King himself.²⁴ Desire for reform could be communicated through legislation and through royal initiatives in founding schools and monasteries but also by the dissemination of new ways of behaviour and thinking.²⁵ It is possible to see the outworkings of Carolingian reform and the imprint of courtly norms in the aristocrats of the ninth century, such as Wido who commissioned a handbook on Christian behaviour from Alcuin, or Bernard of Friuli whose will reveals his ownership not only of Bibles and liturgical books but also of exegesis. Dhuoda, who was married at the court of Louis the Pious to a career courtier, Bernard of Septimania, was both pious and—for a layperson—learned and she hoped to inculcate her son with her own Christian beliefs.²⁶ These men and women, whose Latin learning can not be doubted, are a long way from the figure of the lay courtier Wibod who occasioned poetic mockery from Theodulf for his boorish ways and failure to comprehend sophisticated Latin jokes.²⁷ Yet, such mockery may have joined with the model of royal behaviour to mould a new mentality amongst the aristocracy.

The diffusion of new religious standards and ideas must have been facilitated by the prominent place of education at royal courts. Asser describes Alfred's establishment of a court school and repeatedly underlines the King's concern for the education of the young.²⁸ Contemporary Carolingian sources also emphasize courtly education. Matthew Innes highlights the role of the court in shaping the morals and behavioural norms of juvenile courtiers. Court education socialized young men in courtly behaviour and in moral instruction. The pursuit of wisdom was an integral part of education at the Carolingian court. Recent radical reappraisals of Charlemagne's court library have revealed that, rather than being a treasury of rare classical texts as once thought, it was actually

123–60 (pp. 141–42), and pp. 161–240 (pp. 181–88) (first published respectively in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 71 (1985), 267–301, and *Carolingian Essays: Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies*, ed. by U.-R. Blumenthal (Washington, DC, 1983), pp. 1–98). And see L. Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991), pp. 110–43, on the imperial debate at court. For the royal input into decision making, see Janet L. Nelson, 'The Voice of Charlemagne', in *Belief and Culture: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. by R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76–88.

²⁴ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 77–79, and esp. 88–89, pp. 62–66, and 73–75.

²⁵ See Pratt, 'Persuasion and Invention', below, on Alfred's example in the pursuit of wisdom.

²⁶ Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 211–70, esp. at pp. 223–27, 244–50, 266.

²⁷ Theodulf of Orléans, *On the Court*, ed. and trans. by Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 160–61.

²⁸ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, cc. 76–102, 106, pp. 59–89, 92–96.

characterized by religious works including teaching texts and books of elementary Christian instruction which could have been used in the court school itself.²⁹

Alfred's great desire for religious renewal and his personal quest for good rulership are well known from his translations and from his biography. Susan Irvine's attentive and nuanced reading of Alfred's translation of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* shows how Alfred meditated on the exercise of power through the classical figure of Hercules. He remoulded the classical hero to reflect his own views on the exercise of power and qualities of a good king, portraying him as an exemplar of strength and wisdom. Alfred, as David Pratt explains, saw wisdom as the essential prerequisite for those in power, for himself as King and for his associates in secular and ecclesiastical government. While the King expounds the need for wisdom in his court-sponsored translations from Latin to Old English, this message was disseminated also through the artefacts created under his aegis. Pratt compellingly reinterprets Alfredian metalwork and artefacts to show how they illustrate this theme. He argues that the Fuller Brooch, for example, with its special emphasis on the figure of sight also reflects the Alfredian programme of the search for wisdom. Not only does Pratt demonstrate how these objects should be linked to royal workshops, working for Alfred himself, but he also shows how the royal teaching could be spread not only through verbal texts but also through ornament. Alfred's desire for wisdom did not preclude the acquisition of wealth: valuable and highly crafted objects were appropriate dress for his courtiers, and these could be used to advertise not only their owners' status but their royal master's teaching.³⁰

The debating of controversies was limited neither to royal courts nor to verbal discussion. Royal preoccupation with predestinarian theology was communicated to the courts of Charles the Bald's followers. Lawrence Nees's close and careful analysis of the illustrations of the St Petersburg manuscript of the *Visio Baronti* emphasizes how they engage with the issues precisely under discussion in the courtly debates on predestination, with the issues of purgation and an individual's part in the achievement of salvation. He argues that the manuscript was created at Rheims for Archbishop Hincmar and shows the interplay between the Archbishop's own court and that of the King in political and theological discussion. Nees's article is a powerful reminder of the polyfocal nature of early medieval courts: he demonstrates the links between king and courtier and between their courts, and their joint participation in debate. Royal courts created a network of

²⁹ Bernhardt Bischoff, 'Die Hofbibliothek Karls des Grossen', in his *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1981), III, 149–69; Claudia Villa, 'Die Orazüberlieferung und die "Bibliothek Karls des Grossen": Zum Werkverzeichnis der Handschrift Berlin, Diez B. 66', *Deutsches Archiv*, 51 (1995), 29–52; Donald Bullough, 'Charlemagne's Court-Library Revisited', *Early Medieval Europe*, 12 (2003, forthcoming).

³⁰ On Alfred's view of the link between wealth and wisdom, see Janet L. Nelson, 'Wealth and Wisdom: The Politics of Alfred the Great', in her *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Aldershot, 1999), II, 31–52.

social bonds not only throughout the kingdom between the king and his followers, but also between their courts. Nees underlines the relationship not of court and province but of a network of royal and non-royal centres, in communication with one another.

Courts were centres of debate. Nees shows us how to eavesdrop on discussions at the court of Hincmar. Janet Nelson re-creates the court as a talking shop, a place where, in the hot baths of Aachen, a young courtier might discuss with the king the interpretation of the Scripture. Courtly conversation could be abstrusely learned, pondering the substance of nothing. But often it was very much to the point, intent, for example, on comprehending the significance of the ominous appearance of heavenly portents. The verses of Alcuin, Theodulf, and other poets reveal something of the quick-witted cut and thrust of courtly conversation. Karl and Paul Butzer's account of the study of mathematics at the court of Charlemagne may indicate the sorts of intellectual exercises which sharpened courtly wits. Alcuin's *Propositiones* must surely not only have provided a training in mathematics but also have reflected a society which enjoyed puzzles and riddles, in which lively intellectual competition was an integral part. The Butzers' survey of mathematics reminds us that this type of thinking was not purely abstract: the building of the chapel at Aachen with its complex dome may reveal the fruits of such activity. In England, were Alfred's followers expected to discuss what they had learned from the King's translations which he insisted that they read? Irvine shows how Alfred regarded the figure of Hercules as a positive role model, a transformation from his negative image at the court of Charles the Bald. Her study therefore raises questions about the understanding of classical culture at the English court. Did the nobles talk at court about the meaning of such figures?

The court was a society of individuals, not simply a useful instrument of royal control. Charlemagne's court was not an unchanging monolith; scholars, like Alcuin, whom the King recruited from all over Europe, spent a limited time as members of his court and were then dispersed, very often to serve their royal masters as abbots or bishops.³¹ Donald Bullough's close study of Alcuin's career emphasizes that Alcuin's period at court with Charlemagne was relatively short, raising vital questions about the nature of courtly service. Bullough asks for how long did courtiers stay at the palace and how much time did they spend in each other's company? Alfred's system of rotating attendance at court so that his nobles could spend three months there and three months on their estates was not merely a device to enable them to spend more time with their families but a method of sharing out the privilege of royal proximity.³² Time spent in the royal presence was a marker of status and identity among the aristocracy.³³ But Alfred's court rotation also enabled him to keep a close eye upon his nobles. The excuse letters of courtiers like Alcuin and Einhard, explaining their non-attendance at court, are valuable indicators of the pressure upon such individuals to maintain a regular presence

³¹ Bullough, 'Aula Renovata'.

³² *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 100, pp. 86–87.

³³ Airlie, 'Semper fideles', pp. 129–43.

there. Not to attend, or to have an inadequate excuse, could be interpreted as a sign of rebellion. But trouble could break out at court as well as away from it. Courts were ambivalent instruments of government for kings. The accumulation of power by those most in favour could be explosive. In eleventh-century England, the reign of King Æthelred saw at least two palace revolutions in which the King's erstwhile closest advisers were replaced with other, new favourites.³⁴ A new king needed to make his mark and to be free of the *ancien régime*. The new emperor Louis the Pious not only cleansed the court of Charlemagne's womenfolk, supposedly because of their lax morals, but also of other key counsellors, such as the family of Adalhard and Wala.³⁵ His imperial court was stocked with former courtiers from Aquitaine, such as Benedict of Nursia. Benedict's biographer explains how Benedict acted as a conduit for petitions from the poor; Benedict clearly had his master's ear.³⁶ Proximity to the king conferred this power: in the *De ordine palatii*, Hincmar of Rheims describes how two court officials, the *apocrisiarius* and the count of the palace, could control access to the king, granting and withholding the royal presence.³⁷ The king needed to manage his court, to be both available and hard to attain. He had to be above court rivalries and faction. Despite Louis's attention to court politics—both in 814 on his accession and in 822 when he reinstated some of his father's favourites—he seems to have failed in this respect. The rebellion of his sons in 831 had long-term roots in the intractable problems of family management and the division of the empire, but contemporaries also portray it as the result of discontent at court.³⁸ Paschasius Radbertus sees the crisis of 831 as occasioned by an adulterous alliance between Judith and the chamberlain Bernard which monopolized access to Louis.³⁹ This violated the order set out by Hincmar in his tract on court management which attributed this power to the archchaplain and count of the palace while the queen and her chamberlain ran the household. Discontent with imperial court

³⁴ Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 176–93.

³⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, *Life of Adalard*, cc. 30–38, 46, 50; trans. by Allen Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins, Contemporary Lives of Adalard and Wala* (Syracuse, 1967), pp. 125–82.

³⁶ Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 35, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SS, 15.1 (Hannover, 1887), pp. 198–220 (p. 215); translated by P. Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ont., 1993), pp. 172–73.

³⁷ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH, Fontes, 3 (Munich, 1980), c. 19.

³⁸ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 87–92; E. Ward, 'Agobard of Lyons and Paschasius Radbertus as Critics of the Empress Judith', *Studies in Church History*, 27 (1990), 15–25; and Ward, 'Caesar's Wife: The Career of the Empress Judith, 819–29', in *Charlemagne's Heir*, ed. by Godman and Collins, pp. 205–27.

³⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, cc. 9, 1–2; trans. by Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins*. See also Agobard of Lyons, *Liber apologeticus*, in *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by L. Van Acker, CCCM, 52 (Turnhout, 1981), pp. 307–19.

management must have joined with dissatisfaction in the provinces on the part of Louis's sons to ignite revolt. Moreover, the Emperor's sons must have had their own courts, just as Louis himself had in Aquitaine. Their rebellions and conspiracies were probably fomented through these.

Hincmar's *De ordine palatii* illustrates the way in which the court could both conceal and reveal the king. The court was a theatre for the royal presence, a place where the king could be displayed both domestically with his family and in state on public occasions. Courtiers could enjoy 'the politics of intimacy'. At the same time, Hincmar's tract also reveals how precedence and formality could make access to the king difficult. The palace at Aachen consisted both of public spaces—the great hall and chapel, for example—and of family housing for the king and his officers. The king presented himself in the great public areas, on the balcony of the chapel in front of huge crowds, for example. The long walkway at Aachen which connected the great hall to the chapel was perfectly designed for long processions. The palace was a complex of areas where the emperor could be seen in majesty by many people and of more intimate spaces for smaller and more private audiences.⁴⁰

Narrative accounts, such as those of Einhard and Ermoldus Nigellus, demonstrate the impact which the great Carolingian palaces had upon contemporaries. While the archaeological record is frustratingly patchy, as Uwe Lobbedey makes clear, it can still indicate something of their splendour and the grand scale upon which they were built. The palaces at Aachen and Ingelheim contained large assembly halls, great throne rooms, where the king could receive petitioners, embassies, and other visitors. But not all royal palaces were on this scale, as Lobbedey suggests. Paderborn and Frankfurt were not as grand, nor were the royal centres elsewhere in the Carolingian kingdoms. While it is unlikely that anything in Anglo-Saxon England could compare to Aachen, they may have been more similar in scale to the lesser palaces. James Campbell emphasizes that Anglo-Saxon palace buildings and assembly halls could very well have been built on a very grand scale although little evidence now remains to us. The hall at Yeavering, for example, measured 24,000 square feet and the palace complex also contained a 'theatre' which could seat over three hundred people.

Early medieval courts were itinerant, moving from palace to palace and sojourning at other centres, such as monasteries, noble households, and royal villas. But Campbell points out that even temporary dwellings, such as tents, may have been impressive, and Rosemary Morris draws attention to a Byzantine treatise which catalogues the imperial paraphernalia taken on campaign, including a portable Turkish bath and gold-ornamented commodes. Courtly accoutrements could be portable: the luxury of court culture consisted not only of halls and chapels but also of fine tableware, tapestries, and personal clothing and ornament. But royal itineraries were not lengthy circuits of the kingdom at large, but rather more restricted in scope and largely confined to royal heartlands. The tour of the tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon kings was limited

⁴⁰ Samson, 'Carolingian Palaces', pp. 116–19, 128–29; Lobbedey, 'Carolingian Royal Palaces', below.

almost entirely to Wessex and the south.⁴¹ Even so, as Campbell shows, the organization required must have been considerable. It is also clear that kings liked to spend the major church feasts at particular centres. The eighth- and ninth-century Mercian kings liked to spend Christmas and Easter at Tamworth,⁴² while the Carolingian itineraries from 794 indicate a preference for Aachen at Christmas.⁴³ What difference did the establishment of regular and lengthy stays at Aachen make both to courtly society and to the governance of the kingdom? Charlemagne's elevation of Aachen as his favoured palace, where he stayed every winter for many months, was a modification of traditional itinerancy, creating a semi-permanent base. To what extent are the achievements of his aulic patronage—the lavish and innovative manuscripts of the court school, for example—the result of this new stability?

The court was most on display during the assemblies which met regularly. Campbell draws attention to how charter witness lists show the augmentation of the Anglo-Saxon court for royal assemblies. After 801, Aachen was chosen as the place for the general assembly, as Nelson points out.⁴⁴ The size of royal palaces reflects their role in hosting assemblies. Hincmar's *De ordine palatii* describes the accessibility of the king at this time, chatting to those present.⁴⁵ Assemblies were the occasions for the formulation of policy and for its implementation and times when those whose job it was to disseminate royal instructions and enforce them could be instructed and cajoled into it. Hincmar also records how those coming to the assembly from the regions would seek out courtiers from their locality. The whole court was on show at this time—courtiers were no doubt anxious to impress upon their country cousins their access to the royal ear and to flaunt their superior status, probably expressed through clothing and perhaps through courtly ways. Innes shows us how education at court moulded behaviour and speech and fostered behavioural norms which could be used to distinguish courtiers from others.

Courts did not only host assemblies; the importance of their role in receiving ambassadors and envoys from foreign powers can be seen in the frequency with which such events are recorded in the *Royal Frankish Annals*.⁴⁶ Although one of the primary functions of any court, it is an aspect of court culture which has been given more prominence in discussions of the Byzantine court. As Morris and Lyn Rodley indicate, the *De Ceremoniis* attributed to Constantine Porphyrogennetos and the account of Liutprand

⁴¹ D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 84–91.

⁴² P. Sawyer, 'The Royal Tun in Pre-Conquest England', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 273–99 (pp. 296–97).

⁴³ Ewig, 'Résidence', p. 61.

⁴⁴ And see also Ewig, 'Résidence', pp. 62–63—small assemblies at Aachen, the great assemblies generally held elsewhere; Nelson, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?', below.

⁴⁵ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, c. 35. See also Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 43–50.

⁴⁶ *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH, SRG, 6 (Hannover, 1895).

of Cremona concerning his two visits to the Byzantine court provide an unrivalled view of how court culture could be used to impress official legates and to put them in their place. Liutprand's descriptions of his first welcoming reception at the Byzantine court and his second humiliation put in mind Notker's amusing tales of how Greek ambassadors could be tricked and humbled at the Carolingian court.⁴⁷ Both Notker and Liutprand indicate that the magnificence of the palace and the grandeur of the court were designed to impress foreign envoys. An archaeologist has recently questioned how widely understood were the allusions at Aachen to papal Rome, imperial Ravenna, and Constantinople, suggesting provocatively that those in the best position to comprehend them were eastern legates who might not be impressed. But the target of Aachen's borrowings was at least as much foreign audiences as native ones. Imitation of papal buildings and decoration was probably aimed at the popes and their representatives who visited Francia at this time. The numerous Byzantine legations must have been another target audience.⁴⁸ The Carolingian court played host to visitors from England, Italy, and elsewhere in Europe and beyond.

Moreover, the descriptions of Notker and Liutprand also remind us that the courtly splendour did not only consist of the palaces and their decoration. The clothing of the courtiers, the intimidating nature of court protocol, the music and ritual of court ceremony came together in one experience. The richness of noble and royal garb was a key element in this impression. The development of Byzantine imperial costume can be illustrated, as Rodley shows, and Liutprand and others comment on the lavish nature of courtly clothing. This must have been an essential element in all courts: Campbell notes how William of Malmesbury describes Alfred's investment of his grandson with a golden-sheathed sword and bejewelled and scarlet cloak. Although Einhard tries to distance Charlemagne from sartorial excess, the Carolingians could use resplendent royal dress to good effect, as Nithard's account of the impact of Charles the Bald's 'miraculous' appearance in royal attire at Easter 841 on campaign.⁴⁹ The cumulative effect of a courtly reception and ceremonial can be glimpsed in Ermoldus Nigellus's poetic description of the baptism of the Viking leader, Harold.⁵⁰ This episode is the

⁴⁷ Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, II. 5–7, ed. by H. F. Haefele, MGH, SRG, n.s., 12 (Berlin, 1962), pp. 52–59.

⁴⁸ Walter Berschin, 'Die Ost-West-Gesandtschaften am Hof Karls des Grossen und Ludwig des Frommen (768–840)', in *Karl der Grosse und sein Nachwirken: 1200 Jahre Kultur und Wissenschaft in Europa/Charlemagne and His Heritage: 1200 Years of Civilisation and Science in Europe*, ed. by P. L. Butzer, M. Kerner, and W. Oberschelp, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1997), I, 157–72.

⁴⁹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 23, p. 27–28; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri*, IV, II, 8, ed. by P. Lauer, *Nithard, Histoire des Fils de Louis le Pieux* (Paris, 1926).

⁵⁰ Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hlodwici Pii*, ed. and trans. by Edmond Faral, *Ermold le Noir, Poème sur Louis le Pieux et Épitres au roi Pippin*, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Age, 14 (Paris, 1932), pp. 2–201.

culmination of his poem on Louis the Pious. He begins by describing the palace of Ingelheim with its painted murals and continues with the baptismal ceremony itself which is followed by a feast, a hunt, and finally more feasting. The ceremonies of the occasion—not only the baptism but also gift-giving, feasts, and hunting—are shared by the Emperor himself, his family, and his whole court. The latter is present, magnificently decked out, witnessing and participating in the occasion. The courtiers are as much a part of the event as the Emperor himself. At the end of this succession of rituals, Ermoldus gives Harold a speech in which he acknowledges Louis's Christian imperial authority, a fitting response to the generosity with which he has been treated and the splendour he has seen. Louis's court—in its entirety, a social and physical body—revealed his awesome power. Harold's baptism provokes one to wonder how Alfred's baptism of Guthrum, only fifty years later, was staged.

Royal and imperial courts were audiences for each other. Legates returning home from Rome, Constantinople, or Aachen brought back with them prestigious diplomatic gifts and they must have reported back to their rulers and fellow courtiers on what they had seen. Diplomatic interchange between courts stimulated emulation and rivalry. Lobbedey suggests that both the Lateran and Charlemagne's palace at Aachen drew upon the model of Constantinople. John Osborne shows how one eighth-century pope, Zacharias, sought to distribute his patronage and may have initiated the collection of Roman bronzes which probably impressed Charlemagne to imitation at Aachen. Numerous Anglo-Saxon visitors must also have been impressed: one wonders what impact the papal court and its ceremonial had upon the aspirations of English bishops. Relations between England and Francia—seen, for example, in Alcuin's letters discussed by Bullough—must have had an impact on Anglo-Saxon courts. Alcuin's correspondence with Offa and his associates gives a hint of what the Mercian court may have been like: he sends the King one of his pupils, an able teacher, whom Offa is assured is well employed and not allowed to idle away his time. Alcuin is delighted that Offa is keen to read. This letter suggests that Offa, like Charlemagne and like Alfred, actively recruited scholars to assist him in understanding the Bible and religious teaching.⁵¹ Irvine's paper on the different views of Hercules in England and Francia raises some questions on the transmission of ideas between courts.

The court was a social and physical entity, a body which provided sociability and prestige and required food and shelter. The royal establishment of schools, the patronage of the arts, the building of palaces and fitting them out was a considerable diversion of resources. The day-to-day running of the court was a major organizational task, involving numerous officers. The Carolingian court had a particular officer responsible for ensuring that sufficient preparations were made in advance for the reception of the emperor

⁵¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 64, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 107, and see Bullough, 'Unsettled at Aachen', below, for not only this letter but also for the letter to Beornwine, possibly Offa's chaplain, and that to Hundrida, perhaps one of Cynethryth's court entourage.

and his followers. The Life of St Dunstan by 'B' describes something of those preparations at Malmesbury in Wessex when the king sends officials in advance to check up on arrangements and a miracle was needed to make up for the inadequate mead.⁵² Research on the royal estates of Aquitaine have shown how the provisioning of the court was central to their continuation under royal control.⁵³ The court was therefore both a centre of government and the object itself of administrative effort and organization.

This volume attempts to reflect something of the great diversity of activities encompassed by the royal court but also to emphasize how such a range was integral to their functioning. It emphasizes that early medieval courts were indeed courtly societies, centres with their own bonds and codes of conduct. They were places of friendship and playful behaviour but also places of ambition and tension, insecurity and dependency, government and poetry, ceremony and informality, education and feasting. Just as courtly activities should no longer be viewed in isolation from one another, neither should the courts themselves. Early medieval courts connected with other societies—regional societies, aristocratic kinship networks, and families—and noble, royal, and imperial courts were in communication, as rivals and as emulators of each other.

⁵² B, *Vita s. Dunstani*, in *Memorials of St Dunstan*, ed. by W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, 63 (London, 1874), pp. 3–52, c. 10, pp. 18–19.

⁵³ Jane Martindale, 'Charles the Bald and the Government of the Kingdom of Aquitaine', in *Charles the Bald*, ed. by Gibson and Nelson, pp. 115–38; and Martindale, 'The Kingdom of Aquitaine and the "Dissolution of the Carolingian Fisc"', *Francia*, 11 (1984), 131–91.

Unsettled at Aachen: * Alcuin between Frankfurt and Tours

DONALD A. BULLOUGH†

Alcuin had returned to Francia after a three-year stay in Northumbria (790–93) shortly before pagan Northmen sacked Lindisfarne. Where he was when he wrote his powerful admonitory letters, exclusively to English recipients, occasioned by that disaster is not now determinable; it is equally uncertain whether he rejoined Charlemagne's court in the course of its return journey north from Bavaria in the latter months of 793 or only after it had taken up residence at the new *sacrum palatium* at Frankfurt on the Main. The unusually detailed but by no means unambiguous records of at least parts of the proceedings of the great 'synodal council' there leave no doubt that Alcuin played a major part in its attempted rebuttal of the Christological views then current in parts of the Spanish church. Before it concluded the King asked those taking part to receive Alcuin 'in their fellowship (*consortio*) and prayers, because of his great learning, in matters concerning the Church'.¹

* The author's original contribution to the 1998 Conference was 'Charlemagne's Court Library Revisited'. The reintroduction of material omitted from the lecture as delivered and the addition of new material, together with an extensive documentation, expanded it to a length which excluded it from publication in the present volume. Following discussion between the editor and the author, its place has therefore been taken by the present piece, which is a chapter of the author's *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Brill, 2003) without the accompanying annotation. A fully documented version will appear in that work as its (Part II) Chapter 4, by agreement with the respective publishers. [Essential but minimal footnoting has been added by the editor who is most grateful to the publishers Brill and to Alice Bullough for their help.]

¹ Council of Frankfurt, ed. by A. Werminghoff, MGH, *Concilia aevi Karolini*, 2.1 (Hannover, 1906), pp. 165–71.

The court was still at Frankfurt past midsummer; in August 793, Queen Fastrada died there. By then the King and his army were once again en route for Saxony. Alcuin, it is usually assumed, journeyed directly to the new Aachen palace. But in what is almost certainly the earlier of two long letters to the York community, with an unusually elaborate address-clause, followed by a shorter one to Archbishop Eanbald, all written when the King was still away with his army, he reports that their important messages, written and oral, had been brought by the priest Eanbald who ‘found me *euntem per loca sancta*'.² These latter, the *loca sanctorum martyrum vel confessorum Christi* which we are told his ‘restless journeyings’ took him to, are surely the several religious houses in Francia that Alcuin ‘ruled’ before 796; and an *iter instabilitatis* fits ill with the time when he and the court were established at Aachen. The supporting reason that he gives for his remaining in Francia—in a section of the letter omitted (deliberately?) from the copy or copies kept at Tours—namely, that ‘many strive to stain the faith, and even to rend into several parts the woven tunic of Christ which the soldiers by the cross did not dare to divide’, is likewise most appropriate to the months immediately after the Frankfurt council. Alcuin also remarks that the sending of his replies had been delayed by Eanbald’s (or his own?) ‘serious illness’.³ Almost certainly, they should be dated to the late summer/early autumn of 794 (rather than the next year as Dümmler supposed), together with a letter to Higbald of Lindisfarne which ends with a promise to speak to the King about the Lindisfarne *pueri* still held captive.⁴ On what seems to have been the main purpose of Eanbald’s mission to Alcuin, an invitation to return to his native land, his initial reason for declining was that the King was still away and unable to give his consent. Alcuin’s language in the main letter is very guarded, and even more so elsewhere, but it is not excluded that (as was first suggested by Gaskoin nearly a century ago, followed recently by Katy Cubitt⁵) he had been given indications that he might be put forward as the successor to Eanbald, who was already planning to resign the see: that is, he was to be to Eanbald (I) what Eanbald had been to Archbishop Ælberht. Less plausibly, Alcuin was trying to convey a willingness to be considered when Eanbald did resign. Reiterating in the letter to Eanbald his inability to come to York immediately, Alcuin ‘very much wishes (*opto et obsecro*) that I shall find you still in the high office—if that is possible—which I saw you in when I left’: to follow this with the hope that if Eanbald *has* decided to go he will at least ensure a properly canonical election of ‘the best man (*optimum*)’ seems both an oblique and a bold instance of self-recommendation.⁶ Finally, if an even more obscurely worded letter to the *fratres* (by implication, of York) belongs

² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 43, 42, 44, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 87–89, 85–87, 89–90. Quotation from p. 89.

³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 43, p. 88.

⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 20, pp. 56–58.

⁵ C. J. B. Gaskoin, *Alcuin: His Life and Works* (London, 1904), p. 89; C. Cubitt, ‘Wilfrid’s “usurping bishops”: Episcopal Elections in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–c. 800’, *Northern History*, 25 (1989), 18–38, at pp. 32–33.

⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 44, pp. 89–90. Quotations from p. 90.

here also rather than to 795 or even later, relations between them and their archbishop were at this time far from good; apparently they were also divided among themselves and perhaps under external pressures.⁷ The unique letter to the *nobilissima femina* Liutgard, at this stage the King's concubine rather than wife, in which Alcuin asks to be told how the King is getting on in Saxony and in which royal residence he intends to winter, on the evidence of this last question alone was surely written in the autumn of 794.⁸ Before Christmas of that year the King and his wider court circle were, in fact, reunited at Aachen: the new palace must still have been something of a building site, although evidently it had one or more structures suitable for formal and informal feasting.

The next eight or nine months were to be the longest period during which Alcuin and his monarch were simultaneously in residence there. Before the end of July 795 Charles and a part of the court, although not Alcuin, were on the move again, provoked by Saxon *infidelitas*: they only returned from the middle-Elbe region sometime in the autumn. A second and slightly shorter period at the Aachen palace followed, one marked by a succession of dramatic and momentous events, for which a major part of the evidence comes from letters written by Alcuin, whether in his own name or the King's, in a period in which the royal 'writing-offices' produced neither privileges nor capitularies. One more expedition against Saxon rebels set out from the palace as early as June in 796; by the time the King returned in the autumn of that year, Alcuin was—reluctantly—on the point of leaving the court for St Martin's at Tours, or perhaps indeed had already left.

Alcuin's time at the Frankish court, often loosely and misleadingly labelled 'the Aachen court', dominates most modern biographies and accounts of the early phases of 'the Carolingian Renaissance': in the Ferrières *Vita* by contrast it takes up, on the most generous estimate, a bare fortieth of the whole.⁹ The familiar version wilfully ignores the awkward fact that Alcuin was himself continuously (or more or less continuously) at the Aachen palace, and potentially or actually one of the King's inner circle of scholars and counsellors, for two and a quarter years at most—and the King himself absent for several months. It is that brief period that inspired and was duly reflected in verse accounts of the palace community which, in spite of the seminal studies of Dietrich Schaller¹⁰ and of the acceptance of their implications by other scholars, are still commonly cited as descriptions of Charlemagne's court over almost two decades, with or without the support of passages in Alcuin's letters. Furthermore, in the itinerant pre-Aachen palace days Alcuin—if I am right in post-dating his initial move to Francia to the late summer of 786—had been present for four and a half years or less; and only at Worms, Ingelheim, and, for the first time, Aachen in 787–89 and possibly on the way

⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 47, pp. 91–92.

⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 50, pp. 93–94.

⁹ *Vita Alcuini*, ed. by W. Arndt, MGH, SS, 15 (Hannover, 1888), pp. 184–97.

¹⁰ D. Schaller, 'Vortrags- u. Zirkulardichtung am Hof Karls des Grossen', in his *Studien zur lateinischen Dichtung des Frühmittelalters*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 2 (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 87–109, 412–14.

to and at Frankfurt were the King and he in one another's company (at least potentially) for a longer period than in 794–95. Alcuin's rediscovery and first exploitation of long-neglected pagan and Christian writings and his earliest surviving exercises in both 'divine' and 'secular letters' certainly belong to those years; but a significant part of the intellectual and educational achievement that is commonly credited to his time at court belongs rather (as I believe) to his years at St Martin's, Tours.

When Alcuin declared his belief that by following Charles's zeal for learning 'a new Athens may perhaps (*forsan*) be created in *Francia*' he had been away from Aachen for nearly three years (from 796), during which time he had shown himself to be anything but sympathetic to new developments in the circle of scholars around the King.¹¹ It is at least arguable, therefore, that Alcuin's 'well-known' or 'well-documented' devotion to the Aachen court and its 'academy' is very largely a construct of modern scholars, although his laments about his now-limited resources and his sense of isolation from old friends after the move to the Loire-valley abbey are not to be denied. Certainly, in his comparatively brief final period at the Frankish court, Alcuin was seemingly established as a highly regarded teacher of 'adolescents', *scolam tenens*; and he was responsible for the composition of letters in the King's name to foreign dignitaries and even to other courtiers—to Mercian bishops to ask them to intervene with King Offa, to Offa himself to ask him to recall an undisciplined priest, to Angilbert, and to the new pope, Leo.¹² Yet he was apparently still prepared to consider a return to York: and not, at that stage, only to die and be buried. His surviving correspondence with both non-English and English addressees—which, if I am right in attributing to this period a majority of those to Mercian destinations, totals almost forty letters in approximately twenty-four months—gives no indication of whether this was ever raised with King Charles: *fidelitas* was always a delicate issue, royal friendship was (as Alcuin said) not to be treated lightly and could quickly be replaced by *ira et malevolentia*. The Frankish king, indeed, his absences and presences, rate very few mentions in Alcuin's letters to others before the preparations for a Rome-bound embassy at the end of 795. A promise to Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne to speak to him in due course about the boys in pagan captivity may, however, belong here rather than to 793.¹³ The other major exceptions are the previously quoted letter to Liutgard and the unusual opening of a letter to another 'royal' woman, Charles's sister Gisla, abbess of Chelles: 'By God's grace, we have had a successful festival during these holy days [?Easter (or Pentecost), 794 or 795], and our lord king was happy and the whole court (*omne palatum*) in a state of joy.' Alcuin's own happiness had been increased by the recent gift of (apparently) a psalter and a sacramentary: every palaeographer and liturgical scholar will regret their non-survival.¹⁴

¹¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 170, pp. 278–81, at p. 279.

¹² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 85, 87, 92, 93, pp. 127–28, 131, 135–38.

¹³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 20, pp. 56–58.

¹⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 84, p. 127, with the addition of the word *librorum* in line 12 of the text printed by Dümmler.

A Court Remembered in Verse

The nature of the evidence denies us a satisfactory answer to the simple and obvious questions: For how long did ‘courtiers’, other than writing-office notaries, stay at the palace? How much time did they actually spend in one another’s company? It is certain only that in the comparatively brief period of Alcuin’s residence there, it provided a distinctive setting for the intermittent life in common of a talented and uniquely privileged group of men (and the occasional woman), for a collective and individual display of poetic skills, and for the lauding of the royal patronage that was its precondition and inspiration. The surviving *carmina* from this time or a few months later, respectively by the Northumbrian Alcuin, by the Frankish Angilbert (Abbot of St-Riquier) and by the ‘Goth’ Theodulf (not yet a bishop), are as vivid as they are vigorous, rich in *personalia*, their authors exuberantly paying off old and new scores.¹⁵ Alcuin’s is most satisfactorily interpreted as the latest, and not the second, in a principal series of three, for, if these are to be given a context in (in the modern jargon) ‘real time’, a poem that begins *Venerunt apices vestrae pietatis ab aula [. . .] Portantes vestrae nobis pia dona salutis*, and complains that there is no one ‘giving out fine verses’ in the boys’ quarters was almost certainly written after its author had ceased to be normally resident at the palace. Consequently it can not, as has been supposed, have preceded a poem by Theodulf composed apparently in the spring of 796 which is certainly later than the autumn or early winter of 795, when the first Avar treasures arrived. Moreover, ‘between August 794 and the end of 795’ (so Schaller and Godman¹⁶) is one date at which an absent Angilbert would almost certainly not have been composing a poem directed to the resident palace community; a supposed mission to Rome at the end of 794 is a long-standing error which is extraordinarily difficult to eradicate, and he was certainly at Aachen in the later months of 795.

Internal and external evidence combine to establish Angilbert’s departure from the court for Rome early in 796 (below) as the probable starting point. A revised sequence of poems, and events subsequently, would then be: 1) Angilbert’s reminiscent poem in which, in spite of the close relations between the two men, Alcuin is not named, but prominence is given to the King’s son Charles, both under his own name and with the pseudonym *Iulus*—the name of Aeneas’s son in the *Aeneid*—hitherto wrongly identified as Pippin; 2) Theodulf’s poem, written for dispatch to the Aachen court when both he and Angilbert were temporarily absent but Alcuin’s presence could still be assumed (*Et pater Albinus sedeat pia verba daturus / Sumpturusque cibos ore manique libens*) and intended to be circulated and read aloud; 3) Alcuin’s departure from the palace for St

¹⁵ *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Poet., 1 (Berlin, 1881), I, 360–63, 245–46, 483–89, printed with translation by P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), nos 6, 7, 15, pp. 112–21, 151–62.

¹⁶ Schaller, ‘Vortrags- u. Zirkulardichtung’, pp. 102–04, 108–09; Godman, *Poetry*, pp. 12, 112; and Peter Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), p. 64.

Martin's, Tours in the summer/autumn of 796; and thereafter 4) the composition and dispatch of his letter-poem to King and court, probably before the end of the year but certainly while Angilbert was assumed to be still absent in Italy or on his way back.

Alcuin's verses were not, therefore, 'mercilessly pilloried' by Theodulf in his;¹⁷ rather, Alcuin was making a coolly contemptuous response to his rival's sharp characterizations, with an account of the court at work, not banqueting and performing. Here, the 'rank-and-file' clergy in the chapel, priests, deacons, and subdeacons, are commended for the way they perform their duties, as are the medical doctors who give their services free, two categories on which Theodulf had nothing to say. (Are they, perhaps, among the *plebs* who having been admitted selectively are 'shown the door' when the meal is over?) The *ordo* of those who learn 'grammar' and presumably the other *artes*—young adolescents rather than boys—is (now) master-less, and Alcuin pointedly wonders why Einhard, in spite of being only a recent arrival but who knows the *Aeneid* well, has not been appointed; even Drances (an older layman, an anti-hero in *Aeneid* xi.336–39) would have done, a comment that is hardly compatible with the view that the older Alcuin was hostile to secular verse. Each of the other main groups (*ordines*) has its particular master: *Zaccheus-Ercambald*, in charge of the writers; an unnamed *presbyter egregius*, who seems to be the bishop and senior chaplain Hildebald, controlling the chapel priests; the subdeacons under Jesse, a future Bishop of Amiens; and so on. Alcuin is silent about his personal relations with these men, and they are not among his known correspondents, unless—as is possible—a letter of 801/2 was directed to Hildebald.¹⁸

The final verses of the poem as extant are concerned with individuals to whom (he hints) he has been closer. First is the sole woman, *mea filia*, whom he encourages in stargazing and learning to praise God. She has been identified with Charles's cousin Gundrada, later characterized as *virgo familiarior regis, nobilium nobilissima*; but more probably she is the King's most recent bed-mate, Liutgard, whose praises (on my chronology of the poems) Theodulf had already sung and whom earlier that year Alcuin had characterized as *Deo fidelis et regi* in a letter to Archbishop Peter of Milan, telling him that he was her intermediary in the sending of precious objects as alms-gifts.¹⁹ Then comes the absent Homer, that is, Angilbert, followed by several other courtiers referred to by their bynames, including those he hopes will ensure that there is still porridge for him when he next visits the court; their identification is usually made possible by the other poems in this group, and one of them, the chamberlain Meginfrid ('Thyrsis'), who was widely regarded as particularly influential with the King, is in the select group of Alcuin's lay, non-royal, correspondents. Theodulf himself is simply ignored in Alcuin's poem, unless he was meant to be included in a missing final section. In the triangular relationship of the three men, Theodulf says that he isn't going to write about Angilbert since he isn't there; Alcuin says he will in the future—for the same reason. The promise

¹⁷ Godman, *Poetry*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 246, pp. 398–99.

¹⁹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 190, p. 317.

was almost certainly kept, although not necessarily immediately, in *O, mea cella*, perhaps the most lyrical and moving of Alcuin's poems, and in the formulaic verses 'Dulcis Homere vale, valeat tua vita per aevum'.²⁰

England

A major part of the non-poetic evidence for Alcuin's time at Aachen is inevitably his letters addressed to England: they are strikingly unbalanced in their choice of correspondents. After his short and sharp *epistiuncula* of late 793 or early 794,²¹ no letter now extant is addressed to the Northumbrian king Æthelred, from whom Alcuin had once hoped so much. Writing in 796/7 to the one-time *dux* (in Bernicia?) and *patricius* Osbald who had been king for twenty-seven days in mid-796, Alcuin recalls a warning letter written by him two years previously which had been ignored.²² Was Osbald at that time already in trouble with Æthelred and/or challenging his authority, with the backing of others who briefly supported him? Were other letters that have not survived addressed to Northumbrian *optimates*? We can not say.

In contrast, the Tours and English letter-collections preserve from these years a surprising number of letters to Mercian addressees, predominantly men and women with court connections or themselves 'royals', and refer to several others that have not survived as well as to ones received by Alcuin: letters (from the Frankish king to his 'royal brother') and the embassies or *portidores* who conveyed them may have helped to create opportunities for such exchanges. Personal concerns, not 'matters of state', are their main preoccupation. Although Alcuin evidently placed great store on his standing in the Mercian kingdom and his relations with its rulers, these were often uneasy and threatened ones. His one letter to the King before the dramatic events of mid-796, beginning (uniquely) with *Fideliter* [...], was to accompany the return of a pupil as Offa had requested. Linked with the hope that he himself might yet visit the Mercian court (on his way to York?), Alcuin gives 'strict instructions' that his disciple be given his own pupils to teach and not allowed to fall into bad ways, but this in turn allows him to praise Offa's concern for learning and to encourage him in rather kingly virtues.²³ Writing to the priest Beornwine, he expresses relief that his correspondent had not been a party to damaging remarks about him and that they could continue to be 'at peace' with one another: the supposed falsehoods seem to be related to accusations of being 'unfaithful' (unexplained and not easily explicable) to Offa 'and the English people'. Alcuin nonetheless hopes that at the right time and place Beornwine, who is perhaps a

²⁰ *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, ed. by Dümmler, I, 483–89, 243–44.

²¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 30, pp. 71–72.

²² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 109, p. 156.

²³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 64, p. 107.

court ‘chaplain’, will ‘urge the will of God on the King gently, on bishops respectfully, on leading laymen confidently and on all truthfully’.²⁴

To the ‘pious woman’ Hundruda whom he had once met (*te iam presentem*) presumably on a visit to the Mercian court, he laments that Queen Cynethrith, to whom greetings should be conveyed, and the King had (apparently: Alcuin’s language is very unclear) behaved badly with regard to a (his?) monastery in Mercia; in spite of which he insists, in grovelling terms, on his continuing loyalty. The first part of the letter beseeches his correspondent to maintain the highest standards of the religious life ‘at the royal court’ (*al. ‘palace’*)—perhaps the earliest occurrence of the term in any of Alcuin’s letters—and be an example to others there. It concludes with a request to convey greetings also to Ecgfrith, Offa’s son and designated heir.²⁵

Writing to Ecgfrith, here addressed as *nobilissimus iuvenis* like Charles’s son Pippin earlier but also as one ‘born to rule’ (*natus in solia regni*), Alcuin’s ‘exhortatory letter’ emphasizes the examples provided by his parents, his father for authority, his mother for piety, and the conduct associated with those basic virtues. The son, however, is also to be ‘the prop of their old age’ and still obedient to them: did he have knowledge of tensions between a king-to-be and a father who had been on the throne for nearly forty years?²⁶ A remarkable letter to the King’s daughter Æthelburg(a) under her byname *Eugenia* may also belong to these years, although a later (post-796) dating is possible. Even if part of the inspiration for it was Jerome’s celebrated letter to Julia Eustochium ‘on maintaining her virginity’—there are verbal links but they are few and tenuous, and the two letters are very different in scale—its tone and language make clear that Alcuin seriously doubted whether, in the atmosphere of her earthly court, Æthelburga would succeed in preserving her virginity. ‘Try (*coneris*)’ to keep a promise to do so; in the palaces of the Eternal King, ‘the conqueror of nature will be allied with the creator of all creatures’; and ‘a few days’ effort will be compensated for by rewards’. But ‘don’t replace lust by avarice’.²⁷ One further letter in this group is addressed to an unnamed abbot who was being persecuted and on whose behalf Alcuin promised active intervention with the King.²⁸ The late Professor Wallace-Hadrill’s optimistic ‘[Offa] would not have ignored Alcuin’s opinions, any more than Charlemagne did’ is not the only or indeed the most plausible reading of the post-792 correspondence with Mercia.²⁹

Even with the suggested ante-dating by a year of several of the letters attributed by Dümmler to 795, correspondence with the York church was evidently resumed some

²⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 82, pp. 124–25.

²⁵ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 62, pp. 105–06.

²⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 61, pp. 104–05.

²⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 36, pp. 77–78.

²⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 63, p. 106.

²⁹ J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 120.

time in the latter year. Alcuin wrote a short, blunt, and only mildly rhetorical letter to the cathedral clergy urging them to conduct an honest and unsimoniac election.³⁰ It was still his expressed hope that he would return before it took place, but clearly he had by this time ruled himself out, and not only because of a deeply troubled conscience which he reveals in letters to the pope and others (below). The election and consecration eventually took place only after Archbishop Eanbald's death on 10 August 796, with unseemly haste, if the 'Northumbrian Annals' can be trusted. Although the person chosen by the York brethren (or perhaps only a faction among them) was Alcuin's one-time pupil Eanbald, his apparent initial feelings of pleasure were soon to change to ones of disapproval.

Court, Avars, and Popes

The junior Eanbald's accession had been preceded by other dramatic and disturbing events in both the Northumbrian and the Frankish kingdoms that left their mark on the Aachen court in the months before Alcuin's final departure from it. Of these the 'Royal Annals', at this period contemporary, and the likewise contemporary non-court (but misnamed) 'Annals of Lorsch' provide only a very partial and puzzlingly selective documentation, the details of their respective narratives can not always be reconciled. Conversely, Alcuin's letters and poems are the only evidence for his involvement and are the principal sources of our knowledge of Charles's responses to events on which the Annals are silent; their chronological sequence and absolute dating, however, are rarely unambiguous and are unfortunately not clarified by the scanty references in other near-contemporary and later texts.

The annalistic record for 795 is predominantly concerned with the campaigns against the Saxons which brought Frankish armies for the first time (so far as we know) to Bardowick, a frontier post with Slavdom. Incidentally, however, the 'Royal Annals' and their 'revised' version report the arrival there of legates from an Avar leader or regional governor (*tudun*) with an offer of submission and acceptance of the Christian faith.³¹ The contemporary 'Annals of Lorsch' are silent on this but conversely report the arrival at Aachen later in the year of the *tudun* himself, who after being baptised 'returned home with great honour and gifts'.³² Alcuin, who as usual had remained at Aachen while the King campaigned in Saxony, seems to have heard about the first legation quite quickly. The evidence is in one of a group of letters addressed to Paulinus, patriarch of north-Italian Aquileia, when correspondence between them had been resumed after many months in which no letters were exchanged, and shares with them a proliferation of metaphors and tropes of varied appropriateness and origin. 'Avar

³⁰ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 48, pp. 92–93.

³¹ *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH, SRG, 6 (Hannover, 1895), s.a. 795, pp. 96, 97.

³² *Annales Laureshamenses*, ed. by G. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1 (Berlin, 1828), p. 33.

legates have been sent to our lord the king, with promises that they will submit peacefully and accept the Christian faith. If this is true (*et si hoc verum est*), [...] who of the servants of God should dissociate himself from so good and praiseworthy a task that the Devil's savagery be destroyed and Christ's service grow? But how many eyes are looking to you to see what you mean to do' because, Alcuin continues, 'the area falls to you on the basis of contiguity' and you are the right person in other respects also (*vicinitas locorum tibi competit et sapientiae decus subpetit et auctoritatis excellentia tibi appetit*).³³ Language and context favour a 'late 795' date rather than Düümmler's (widely followed) 796; writing to Bishop Arn of Salzburg at the end of May (or beginning of June) 796, Alcuin acknowledges, in a significant change of mood (or attitude), that *he* is henceforth the royally approved leader of missionary activity in Avar territory.³⁴ Nonetheless, in the months between the writing of the letters to Paulinus and to Arn it was an expedition directed, although not personally led, by Duke Eric of Friuli that reached the Avar *hring* in the east European plain for the first time and returned with part of its accumulated treasures.

A necessary corollary is that Eric's visit to Aachen and conversation with Alcuin there, recalled in a short letter to him,³⁵ had been in the late summer/early autumn of 795, when also one of several near-contemporaneous letters to Paulinus was entrusted to him,³⁶ and that the letter itself, assuring him that its writer was praying that he would emerge safe and sound and victorious from encounters with God's enemies and encouraging him to heed Paulinus's advice, was written after his return to his north-east Italian 'duchy' but—despite Jaffé and most modern commentators—almost certainly before the results of the expedition were known.³⁷

Simultaneously with these events although apparently originally independent of them, and following a visit to the royal court of two high-placed figures in the papal curia, preparations were in hand for a Frankish embassy to Pope Hadrian. Its leader was to be Angilbert, a man who belonged to the King's most intimate circle—*fidelis familiaris, auricolarius*, and counsellor in all things, lover of his daughter Bertha—and, in spite of his criticizable private life, was no less trusted by his teacher Alcuin and others; writing to Pope Hadrian (a letter that was never sent) and subsequently to Pope Leo, Alcuin declared that Angilbert would be passing on confidences and making representations orally that he had been unwilling to commit to parchment.³⁸ The legation's primary purpose could well have been, although this must remain speculative, to improve relations between the two courts, which had been cool since Charles and his advisers

³³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 99, pp. 143–44.

³⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 107, pp. 153–54.

³⁵ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 98, p. 142.

³⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 99, pp. 143–44.

³⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 98, p. 142.

³⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 27, 94, pp. 68–69, 138–39.

had learnt that the Byzantine position on images they had vigorously denounced was also that of the pope. A range of gifts was prepared for sending to Hadrian. Pre-eminent among them was the magnificent 'Dagulf Psalter' (Vienna, Nat. Bibl. 1861)—so-called from the principal scribe of its stylish minuscule—with its novel 'Vulgate' *cantica* and credal collection and its distinctive ivory book covers; whether or not Alcuin had some input to its texts (the arguments are equivocal), the courtier with overall responsibility for its creation was most probably the head of the chapel, Bishop Hildebald of Cologne. Subsequently, a generous share of the first tranche of the captured Avar treasure hoard was destined for the papal court.

Letters from Alcuin to several different recipients in the Alpine, north-Italian, and central-Italian regions of the Frankish king's dominions (most of them copied in one or both versions of the 'basic Tours collection'), although attributed by Dümmler to arbitrarily scattered dates, make best sense if they were written either at this time or during the preparations for Angilbert's rearranged departure: they throw vivid light on Alcuin's perceptions of himself, as well as on his circle of friends and acquaintances, in the mid-790s. One to Paulinus of Aquileia, however, which marks the resumption of correspondence between the two men after a break apparently extending back to the closure of the Frankfurt synod, should probably be dated a few months earlier, that is, to the summer of 795.³⁹ It is unusually long—four to seven manuscript pages in the several copies—and is written in Alcuin's most high-flown 'baroque' epistolary style, perhaps in deliberate emulation of his correspondent's own rhetorical language. Until the recent arrival of that desperately awaited letter, which may have been accompanied by a poem, Alcuin had heard nothing from his old friend for far too long. Alas! he must acknowledge his weaknesses and sins, his worldliness and wallowing in filth; and deploying a multiplicity of New Testament exemplars and types and linking a new and extended medical metaphor with 'the eye of the heart', Alcuin beseeches his spiritual mentor through his prayers to raise him up and heal him.

The first of only two extant letters to another north-Italian addressee, Archbishop Peter of Milan—'O that I had the eagle's wings, so that with a following wind (*Euro*) I might speedily fly over the Alpine peaks to be in your presence'—is considerably shorter than that to Paulinus; but after the briefest of allusions to mutual *caritas*, it shares some of its sentiments and language, to the extent that the later Rheims copyist has added a marginal note *accusatio Alcuini*, and is probably close to it in date. Repeatedly referring to the Archbishop as the father and himself as the son, Alcuin contrasts his own failings with Peter's conspicuous qualities as a pastor and teacher of the following generations, even when—just like Paul, although in this case it is the letter writer who is the wayward son and disciple—this is necessarily through the medium of letters.⁴⁰ The second letter is merely an *epistiuncula*, in which Alcuin says that he is acting as an intermediary for gifts from Liutgard, and was in all probability written to be taken to north Italy by an

³⁹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 86, pp. 128–31.

⁴⁰ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 83, pp. 125–27.

unnamed *portitor* later that year or early in 796;⁴¹ either correspondence entrusted to the same carrier may be identifiable. The longer letter is the only testimony to the Milanese archbishop's supposed learning and spirituality, and although it is apparent that other letters passed between the two men, as is almost always the case we have no idea what sort of response Alcuin elicited from his admired correspondent.

Among the letters certainly written with the forthcoming embassy to Rome in view, a characteristic short one reminds Bishop Egino (of Konstanz; also *rector* of St Gallen) that in personal conversation (*praesenti conloquitione [sic]*: at Frankfurt? at Aachen?) he had promised to send some relics—perhaps to be placed in one of Alcuin's monasteries or to be added to his other personal possessions; Egino now has the opportunity of entrusting them to 'my son' Angilbert: *obsecro ut veraciter perficias quod hilariter promittebas*.⁴² If Remedius was already bishop at the eastern-Alpine diocese of Chur—possibly the first non-Rhaetian, certainly the last bishop who simultaneously exercised secular authority in the region—one or more letters to him may belong here.⁴³ Despite Alcuin's describing Remedius as 'our most dear and faithful friend' when writing to Arn in 800,⁴⁴ the letters are essentially unemotional requests for prayers, both by the Bishop and by the monasteries in his diocese, linked in one case with thanks for gifts received; this notwithstanding, Alcuin's name is not to be found in Pfäfers's splendid *Liber Viventium* of a few years later, although at the time of its compilation, of course, Alcuin's name might have been in a separate *liber mortuum* (*al. anniversariorum*).⁴⁵

The letter to Duke Eric may also have been intended for conveyance by Angilbert's legation, but because of the latter's postponement was probably conveyed by an anonymous *portitor* earlier;⁴⁶ in another short letter that clearly belongs here Alcuin assures Paulinus of Aquileia, from whom he has recently heard once more, that Angilbert will bring more extensive greetings on his way to Rome.⁴⁷ Two other letters almost certainly reflect the intended final stages of the journey to the papal city, namely, approaching it along the Via Salaria.⁴⁸ The first is addressed to Abbot Usuald and the congregation of S. Salvatore, Rieti (*not* S. Salvatore, Monte Amiata—an old error that is extraordinarily difficult to dislodge), to whose prayers Alcuin had been commended in the previous decade and whose recent petitioning of the King he had, he claimed, supported jointly with 'the most pious lady' Liutgard. The second tells the monastery at Farfa (in the

⁴¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 190, p. 317.

⁴² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 75, pp. 117–18.

⁴³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 76, 77, 263, 310, pp. 118, 420–21, 478–79.

⁴⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 208, pp. 345–46, at p. 346.

⁴⁵ *Liber Viventium Fabariensis*, ed. by A. Bruckner and H. R. Sennhauser (Basel, 1973).

⁴⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 98, p. 142.

⁴⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 95, pp. 139–40.

⁴⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 90, 91, pp. 134–35

Sabina) and its abbot Mauroald, whom he has never met, that he was taking advantage of a visitor to the area to ask to be included in its prayer fraternity.

The most remarkable of the letters prepared by Alcuin for conveyance by the aborted legation is the one addressed to Pope Hadrian, which Dümmler dated more than a year earlier in the belief—an erroneous one—that Angilbert had been sent to Rome in the summer of 794 with the decisions of the Council of Frankfurt. Its tenor and purpose were clearly recognized by the Rheims copyist who wrote in the margin *Nota. De confessione et accusatione Alchuini.*⁴⁹ Alcuin is here petitioning the Pope for forgiveness from unspecified but clearly major sins, which I argue elsewhere are sexual ones. I remain uncertain whether his appeal is to be understood as an emotional outpouring when a sense of his sinfulness had become unbearable (which the earlier letter to Paulinus would certainly support) or whether he was acknowledging his need of formal reconciliation, which he felt no local bishop, that is, the Bishop of Liège or even the bishop and ‘archchaplain’ Hildebald, could provide. It was thus a personal, even a psychological, issue that provoked Alcuin’s earliest explicit assertion of the unique authority of the Roman bishop as vicar and heir (*heres*) of Peter; and he does so in terms that seem to owe as much to Pope Leo I’s sermons (*tractatus*) as to recent papal letters, although at least one key phrase may echo a letter of Hadrian’s. The tie of baptism (*per sacri baptismatis adunctionem*—an apparently unique usage of a favourite word) had brought him into the sheepfold of Christ the shepherd, who after his resurrection had triply commended his sheep to Peter ‘prince of the Apostles’, to whom also he had given ‘the power of binding and loosing’ in heaven and on earth. (The New Testament bases are, of course, respectively John 21. 15–17 and Matthew 16. 19; but Alcuin does not here quote either Vulgate passage verbatim.)

He is now, however, a straying and sick sheep who seeks to be healed, and the Bishop of Rome has the medicinal power. That he had not sought forgiveness as a penitent earlier, although probably aware of Hadrian’s reiteration of the bars to ordination in a letter of 790/91 preserved in the *Codex Carolinus*, may well have been a major factor in his finally ruling himself out as Archbishop Eanbald (I)’s future successor. If so (and it will remain mere speculation) it helps to explain his insistence, in the most general terms, on the unforgiveableness of the ‘heresy of simony’ in the choice of a bishop.

When, however, the Frankish embassy was on the point of setting out for Rome—hardly earlier than February/March—messengers from that city arrived at Aachen with news of Hadrian’s death on 25 December 795 and the election the very next day of his successor, Leo (III). Charles’s reactions to the death of a Bishop of Rome with whom he had had close relations for more than twenty years and his replacement by someone previously unknown to him were to involve Alcuin at several levels. He composed for the King a brief ‘letter of instruction’ addressed to Angilbert as leader of the embassy, a copy of which was subsequently taken to Tours and later recopied there for sending

⁴⁹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 27, pp. 68–69; Bavarian State Library, MS Reg. Lat. 272, fol. 73.

to Salzburg.⁵⁰ It does not suggest a very favourable view of the new pope: the royal courtier is to look for occasions ‘to admonish him diligently concerning total probity (*omni honestate*) in his life and in particular concerning observance of the holy canons and pious governance of God’s holy Church’, to exhort him ‘to destroy the heresy of simony, which in many places badly disfigures the body of the Church’ (not least, in the regions politically subject to the *rex Francorum et Langobardorum* but ecclesiastically subject to the Bishop of Rome, as Pope Hadrian had complained) and to raise any other matters that he knows to have been a cause of contention. More significantly, Alcuin was entrusted with the composition of a letter to the new pope, pointedly also with Charles’s name and title, as *rex Francorum et Langobardorum et patricius Romanorum*, placed first in the address-clause.⁵¹ At several points, his personal style and characteristic rhetorical devices break through, in phrases such as *quae vel nobis voluntaria vel vobis necessaria* and *ductore et datore*. Conversely, his language here may owe rather more than has been generally recognized to earlier letters composed by other leading court figures or in its chapel—of which only a tiny number are extant—but also to letters *from* the papal curia. Overall, the letter demonstrates Alcuin’s ability to find appropriate language, with a minimum of direct biblical quotation, for an unfamiliar situation and for a novel assertion, although made perhaps with conscious ambiguity, of the Frankish king’s position in the western Church at the expense of the Bishop of Rome.

In cooler terms than Alcuin’s own ‘consolatory’ letters later and tempered by the familiar words of the apostle Paul (I Thess. 4. 13–14), Charles declares his tearful sadness at the death of ‘a most loved father and most faithful friend’. But this is mingled with joy at the choice of a successor: someone has been chosen who can ‘intercede daily with the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, for the stability of the whole Church and for my well-being and that of my *fideles*, indeed for the prosperity of the whole kingdom given to us by God’. The letter reaches its climax in the much quoted but far from straightforward declaration that

It is our function—to the extent that Divine goodness aids us—externally to defend Christ’s holy Church on every side by force against the incursion of pagans and the ravaging of infidels, internally *catholicae fidei agnitione munire*. It is yours, most holy father, to aid our struggle with hands raised to God, like Moses, to the end that, with God as guide and giver, the Christian people should everywhere and always be victorious over the enemies of its holy name, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified through the whole world.⁵²

What is surely conspicuous here is the limited function allowed to the pope, for which it would be hard to find convincing precedents. Indeed, it is no more than Alcuin

⁵⁰ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 92, pp. 135–36.

⁵¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 93, pp. 136–38.

⁵² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 93, pp. 136–38, quotation from pp. 137–38.

claims for himself in relation to Paulinus of Aquileia some two years later (*nostrum est elevatis cum Moyse manibus in caelum humilitatis precibus te adiuvare*)⁵³ and very different from ‘the exaltation by Charlemagne of the Roman church’ regularly demanded by Pope Hadrian in his letters to the Frankish king and from the Petrine authority recently attributed to that same pope by Alcuin. How limiting it is depends to some extent on the interpretation of the final element in the contrasting assertion of the King’s responsibilities. *Agnitio* of ‘the catholic [*al.* true] faith’ is very unusual, and *munire* is unfortunately ambiguous (‘strengthening *al.* supporting [within]’ or ‘fortifying [against]’?); not surprisingly, perhaps, the phrase has been variously understood by modern commentators. A translation of the noun as ‘diffusion’, with its suggestion of mission-field activity, is inappropriate in the context, and not within its recognized semantic field. But Charles’s part in making the true faith known to the people or peoples whom he rules, which Alcuin has chosen to express in this way, is not merely a secondary, instrumental, one. Rather, his authority extends to establishing what the true faith is, as was implicit—perhaps even explicit—in the preparations for and proceedings of the Frankfurt synod, and as Alcuin will claim for the Frankish king in his later responses to the ‘Adoptionist heresy’.

When, in the words of the so-called ‘Annals of Lorsch’, ‘the royal lamenting was over’ Charles gave instructions for prayers to be offered ‘throughout the whole Christian people (*per universum christianum populum*) within his lands’ and distributed ‘an abundance of alms for him’. Of the innumerable oral communications and letters from the court which this implies, no certain trace survives, excepting a unique circular letter in Alcuin’s own name to ‘the bishops of Britain’.⁵⁴ He noted as the occasion of its sending, and of his seeking their intercession for his soul, that ‘he had not failed to take advantage of the opportunity of the present [Frankish royal] embassy’, which he defined subsequently as the *fratres et consacerdotes* who were bearing gifts to back up the royal requests for prayers. These were specified as for the King himself, for ‘the stability of his kingdom and likewise for the extension (*dilatatione*) of the Christian name’ (the former phrase common enough in royal diplomas, the latter going back at least to Augustine, but both occurring here apparently for the first time in Alcuin’s writings), and lastly, ‘for the soul of the [or ‘our’?] most blessed father Pope Hadrian’. The writer’s serious doubts about how his letter would be received by the bishops of the *patria* on which he had recently turned his back, and perhaps unease about particular requests, are suggested by its unusually elaborate address-clause, ‘to the most holy and revered bishops of Britain, our most dear homeland, Alcuin a humble deacon, a son of the holy church of York [...]’, and by the authenticating-clause before his farewell, *Hec ut nostra credatis, nostro sigillo subter sigillavimus*.

The last of the commemorations ordered by the dead pope’s ‘devoted son’ was ‘an epitaph written in gold letters on marble, to be made in Francia so that he might send it

⁵³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 139, pp. 221–22.

⁵⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 104 (a ‘recipient’s text’), pp. 150–51.

to Rome to adorn the sepulchre of the supreme pontiff Hadrian'; someone (possibly Alcuin himself) sent a similar description, with the additional detail that it was in verse, to Northumbria where it was added to the local annals. A large slab of a distinctive black marble quarried in the Dinant region was brought to Aachen; within a very accomplished vine-scroll border and in a capital script that departs from 'classical' norms only in its occasional ligatures and embraced letters, thirty-eight lines of elegiac distichs, composed by Alcuin, were incised.⁵⁵ Whether or not other court poets were given an opportunity to provide alternative texts for the epitaph is not known: Theodulf's, which is sometimes said to have been produced 'in competition', may always have been intended to serve a different function. The skilfulness of Alcuin's verses and the elements of originality in his language have not always been appreciated. Surprisingly, they seem to owe nothing to earlier papal epitaphs; even the opening epithet, an all embracing *pater ecclesiae*, seems unparalleled elsewhere. What follows is a seemingly novel juxtaposition and linking of two themes. Having announced the epitaph's association with Hadrian's 'place of rest', the record of the dead pope's virtues and achievements that follows, although inevitably drawing on epigraphic commonplaces and earlier Christian poetry, is unusually wide ranging and specific, with a reference to Hadrian's repairs to the city's defences. A distich follows (vv. 15–16) proclaiming that, for the man here commemorated, death will have been not the end but 'the door straight-away (*mox*) to the better life'. Hadrian, that is, is among those who, in Bede's account of Drythelm's vision (paraphrased in Alcuin's 'York poem'), 'because they have been perfect in every word and deed and thought [...] come to the heavenly kingdom as soon as they leave the body', while those who have practiced good works without attaining that state of perfection will await the Final Judgement in a lovely but inferior place—*requies* to Alcuin, *paradisus* to other early Carolingian writers. This makes possible the inscription's distinctive second half, which breaks with convention to invoke prayers not so much for the deceased as for Charles and his subjects. Hadrian in death, that is to say, is to be what the Frankish king hopes Leo will be in life, and with greater confidence: namely, a petitioner with God in his heavenly kingdom, the consequences of which will finally be revealed when the trumpet sounds for the Last Judgement.

The impressive and grandiloquent epitaph can hardly have been ready for inclusion in the baggage of Angilbert's legation. The opening line of Theodulf's very different epitaph, *Aurea funereum complectit littera carmen, marmora pro tunicis* etc. in a later line (21), and the metaphorical *murus et arma* of the deceased pope suggest that the incised text was already known to him, and four lines are addressed directly to Pope Leo. Perhaps, when the completed epitaph was taken to Rome for display above Hadrian's tomb in the left crossing of St Peter's basilica, a copy of Theodulf's verses accompanied it.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, ed. by Dümmler, I, 113–14.

⁵⁶ *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, ed. by Dümmler, I, 489–90.

At the Aachen Court: Last Months

However many letters from Alcuin had been dispatched to Italy ahead of Angilbert's delayed embassy and which (if any) were sent when he was already on his way, one that the royal legate certainly took to Rome was the very personal and emotional letter to Leo, revising and supplementing the one composed but never sent to his papal predecessor.⁵⁷ The noteworthy changes in phraseology are hardly self-explanatory, and their implications for Alcuin's concept of papal authority are equally unclear: among the epithets for the pope are 'vicar of the Apostles' (i.e. of Peter and Paul), 'heir of the Fathers' (and not of Peter), and the seemingly unique 'nourisher of the one unspotted dove'. Alcuin expects that the prayers and letters of exhortation of the person so characterized will keep the sheepfold secure, and he assumes that the former will be supported by angelic presences sent down from above. The Petrine power of binding and loosing is not explicitly referred to, although the post-resurrection commission to Peter is, and when it comes to Alcuin's own 'terrible bonds of [his] sins', it is by 'the ecclesiastical power of apostolic authority' that he hopes to be released. On his personal devotion to the apostolic see and on the reasons for his petitioning for forgiveness, Angilbert (the letter concludes) will have more to convey 'by word of mouth'.

Alcuin was not to learn of the pope's response to his letter and oral pleas until he had left Aachen for Tours, perhaps indeed not until some time in 797; even then it was only from Angilbert. The one letter written to his friend and confidant while he was in Italy and Alcuin himself still at Aachen displays an almost bewildering change of mood from those addressed to the two popes and to Paulinus.⁵⁸ He is admittedly unsettled, 'a man all at sea', but he is not moaning, nor whining about 'false friends'. There is only the briefest of references to his sins, and none at all to the world at large. His acquisitive self is very much to the fore: he is hopeful that Angilbert will be on the lookout for relics and objects that will beautify churches, and he underlines his eagerness with an Ovidian tag whose authorship he knows. (It is perhaps more probable that Alcuin had taken this from some grammarian than directly from a manuscript of Ovid's poems, but the latter is not entirely excluded.) But this prompts him to a comment on his own playfulness, with a trope that is surely not of his own coining but has not so far been found elsewhere, *Paululum propter refectionem animi rhetorica lusi lepidatate*, before he reverts to his 'wrinkled brow' and need for prayers.

That fears for his own future in heaven were still much on his mind is indeed clear from his circular letter to 'the bishops of Britain'. It is apparent from later correspondence that his concern about the York church had also not diminished. But if this was matched by concern for the Northumbrian kingdom at large, it is not obviously reflected in letters that were 'registered' nor in the rare later allusions—conceivably, because he was conscious that it had been ineffective. The obvious implication of a letter of 796/7 to the exiled Osbald, king for less than a month in 796, in which Alcuin recalls writing

⁵⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 94, pp. 138–39.

⁵⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 97, pp. 141–42.

to him *ante biennium*, is that no correspondence had been exchanged in the intervening period;⁵⁹ a letter to King Eardwulf who followed him refers to ‘ancient friendship’ but no previous correspondence;⁶⁰ and while Alcuin’s fear of a simoniacal election may be an implicit judgement on King Æthelred, other explanations are obviously possible.

A letter from the Frankish king to the Mercian king Offa at the very end of his life, frequently cited for its references to visiting English traders and to objects of trade, must on stylistic grounds be credited either to Alcuin or to an attentive disciple at the Aachen court.⁶¹ If the latter, was it only written after Alcuin’s departure? If the former, what is its chronological relationship with other letters of Alcuin and in particular with his circular letter to the bishops of Britain and with the last of his own letters to Offa? Unlike earlier letters in the King’s name, it is not included in the ‘Tours collection’, but is the last item—whether as an afterthought or as a much later addition—in the main English collection. Offa is again addressed by Charles as ‘brother’, but the preceding royal title is *rex Francorum et Langobardorum ac patricius Romanorum*, not [. . .] *et defensor sanctae Dei ecclesiae*. The text of the letter shares with earlier ones an ability to adapt Alcuin’s epistolary forms and style to the occasion as well as to the nominal author. Typically, it does not include a single biblical quotation, although it has one generalized citation of Augustine, on prayers for the dead, and phrases such as *lucra sectantes non religioni servientes* have a characteristically Alcuinian ring. It departs (probably) from standard Frankish royal writing-office practice when it assures Offa of the royal *protectio et patrocinium* enjoyed by legitimate traders; it insists, however, that they are liable to the regular tolls. Less clear than we would wish, not least because of the letter writer’s ambiguous tense usage, is a remarkable passage about ‘the priest Odberht’—involuntarily priested, if (as is probable) he is the Eadberht who a few months later seized the vacant Kentish throne—and other exiles from Mercia whom the Frankish king had taken under ‘the wings of his protection’: it appears to be saying, however, that Odberht had already been in Rome (invoking the late Pope Hadrian’s help?) and was about to be sent back there (*Romam diregimius*) with his fellow exiles for final judgement by the pope in their disputes with both Offa and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who were in different ways their superiors. The letter reports that royal gifts of vestments have been sent to the episcopal sees of both Mercia and Northumbria, ‘in alms for Pope Hadrian’, whose soul should he prayed for (‘not that there is any doubt that it is already in the [lace of rest]—a phrase that can be used as an argument both for and against Alcuin’s authorship), and that treasures from the Avar hoard have been sent both to ‘the metropolitan cities’ and to Offa himself. Whether Alcuin or a disciple had composed the letter to Offa, it is likely that it was sent either simultaneously with Alcuin’s circular letter to the British bishops or not very much later, but in any case

⁵⁹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 109, p. 156.

⁶⁰ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 108, p. 155.

⁶¹ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 100, pp. 144–46.

before King *Æthelred* of Northumbria's assassination on 18 or 19 April 796 became known at Aachen.

The dreadful news, which would presumably have reached the palace sometime in May, had been conveyed (as Alcuin records when writing to Offa shortly afterwards) in a letter picked up by Frankish messengers who had visited the Mercian court on their way back from *Scotia*—probably Ireland proper, although Dalriada and/or Iona can not be excluded. The address-clause of Alcuin's letter, as in almost all private ones, names the addressee first, and the Mercian king's 'style' is distinct from that used in letters composed in the name of the Frankish king.⁶² Offa (who may never have received the letter, since he died, apparently nonviolently, at the end of July) is, however immediately assured what a good friend he has in King Charles: 'he has often spoken of you to me in a loving and trusting way'. He had been preparing to send legates to Rome to get a judgement from the pope, in association with the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the matter of the Mercian exile *Odberht*-*Eadberht*, and gifts were likewise due to be sent to Offa and to his bishops, with requests for prayers for himself and for the Pope (Leo). Furthermore, he had actually put in the hands of other messengers similar gifts and letters for King *Æthelred*, when those returning from Britain arrived at the court. Exploding with anger, Charles took his gifts back and cursed the unfaithful Northumbrians, which enabled Alcuin to claim—in characteristic language—that if he had not intervened the Frankish king would have withdrawn every favour and done every evil to that people that he could (*quicquid eis boni abstrahere potuisset et mali machinare iam fecisset*). But it also enabled Alcuin to decide that he had no future in his native country, and to combine admiration with admonition in addressing the King of Mercia and his family. That the letter brought from the Mercian court rightly attributed the assassination to Northumbrian *seniores populi* is established by two later entries in the 'Northumbrian Annals', recording that two years later the same men tried unsuccessfully but bloodily to kill another king: Duke Wada subsequently fled, Duke Aldred (Ealdred) remained, to be killed by 'a faithful dependent' of the late King *Æthelred* a year later (799). Of all this, it should be noted, contemporary and later Frankish annals report absolutely nothing.

The assassination, like the sack of Lindisfarne, prompted other letters from Alcuin, but only (in the extant examples) to a restricted group of the dead king's female kinsfolk. One went to his mother, *Ætheldrutha*, with whose daughter Alcuin had possibly travelled to Italy in 780/81; another and perhaps a second also, to his sister-in-law (Offa's daughter) *Æthelburga*, abbess of an unidentified Mercian religious community.⁶³ The letter to *Æthelburga* is primarily concerned with the recipient's, and the writer's, current miseries and future well-being, with no more than a perfunctory offer of consolation. That to the bereaved queen-mother is properly an *epistola consolatoria*, and unless—as is not absolutely excluded—a letter in Alcuin's 'personal' collection

⁶² Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 101, pp. 146–48.

⁶³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 105, 102, 103, pp. 151–52, 148–50.

addressed to an anonymous *mater* is a pre-existing formulary text rather than partially dependent on the Ætheldrutha letter, it is the earliest example of the genre in the extant correspondence. It owes very little, however, to the literary tradition of such letters, Christian or pre-Christian. Their basic pattern is a rehearsing of the virtues displayed in life by the person now lamented, often at considerable length, and the suggestion that the promise of a more glorious life in eternity is a reason rather for rejoicing by the bereaved. Alcuin can offer no such promise here: Christ is the only true consoler of the living, the only one who can save the dead by his mercifulness, and if the late king had died in sin (*forte*, but it is apparent that Alcuin had little doubt), he is fortunate and his mother is also fortunate that she survives him to offer intercessions and give alms, so that Christ's mercy extends to him. Conspicuously, as in the other letters, there are no allusions to nor invoking of the Virgin Mary.

Alcuin concludes with an exhortation directed to the doubly bereaved Ætheldrutha herself, in part in quite material terms: while she still has power of disposal over her not inconsiderable possessions (*potestatem rerum tuarum*, i.e. as a royal widow, rather than as abbess?), she should be distributing them in a fitting way, to her own eternal benefit. What became of her is indicated by another letter, which Dümmler supposed was written in her son's lifetime but which almost certainly belongs to the end of the century: here she is revealed as the head of a 'double monastery'—whether one sustained by her own former possessions or long established (or both) is not clear—and 'steward of the Lord's estate'.⁶⁴ No extant letter is addressed to the murdered king's wife, and the other letters in this group suggest that none was written. In Alcuin's letter to her sister, Abbess Æthelburga, he advised her to encourage the widowed queen, whom he does not name, likewise to serve Christ in a religious community, 'so that worldly woe may be a spur to lasting joy'.

In the midst of his demonstrable concern with events in Northumbria and his claim that they engaged the Frankish king also, Alcuin received a letter from the Bishop of Salzburg, Arn—on the Wednesday after Pentecost, that is, 25 May, as he uncharacteristically records—to which he responded with the minimum of delay.⁶⁵ He is not so specific on where he is writing from, but in spite of the incidental reference to himself as being among the *matriculares* (*sic*) who pray for Arn and his work, it is reasonably clear that Alcuin is still at the Aachen palace: although in places his language is puzzlingly obscure, not least for lack of obvious parallels to key phrases, it appears that the King (who is on the point of leading a punitive expedition into Saxony) and his counsellors have just decided that Bishop Arn should accompany the Bavarian and Alamannian army, intended to link up with Pippin's from Italy for the decisive attack on the Avars, and begin the work of mission in the region north of the river Drau. Alcuin's wording suggests also that he would like Arn to believe that he had influenced the royal decision but while his letter to Paulinus of Aquileia the previous year, when

⁶⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 79, pp. 120–22.

⁶⁵ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 107, pp. 153–54.

he expected him to lead the mission, had been richly rhetorical, the dominant tone of that to Arn is thoroughly practical with a solid New Testament base.

‘For a long time [the Avar] kingdom was stable and strong’, he remarks—an unexpected judgement, perhaps in implicit contrast with his own. Now that the opportunity of conversion has presented itself, Alcuin was concerned that it should not be thrown away; the Bishop was being sent to respond to the Avar legation that had sued for peace, although with a protective expeditionary force. ‘Preach the Gospel, not reach out for tithes’ is his earnest recommendation, with an allusion to a remark ostensibly made by the apostle Paul (in fact in the falsely attributed Letter to the Hebrews) that it is necessary for infants to be fed on milk until they have grown enough to take solid food; the imposing of tithes, which we ourselves resent, and was imposed on Saxons right from the start as a ‘mandate of God’, has already turned them from the Christian faith.

It is possible that a letter addressed to the King and his bishops on the right and wrong ways of ‘converting’ the defeated Avars was also composed and sent before Alcuin left Aachen; but it is more likely that it belongs with others written not long after his move to St Martin’s at Tours. A very personal letter addressed to Alcuin’s ‘dearest son’ Damoetas, that is, Archbishop Riculf of Mainz, was evidently written while he was still at the palace (*ego [...] remaneo domi*) and the King and most of his court were away in Saxony.⁶⁶ He is alarmed at the risks Riculf would be running, but hopeful that his Christian conduct and a watchful ‘angel of the Lord’ will ensure his safe return. To add to his misery all his younger friends and disciples are away somewhere—among them, Angilbert in Italy, Candidus back in Britain—or ill, or both. Military victory and safe return will bring cheer, but of an increase of faith among the Saxons there is not a word.

By the time that letters written in the late spring/early summer of 796 would have reached their intended recipients, those to England conveyed perhaps by the greatly trusted Candidus, Alcuin was probably no longer resident at the palace. Like the royal widows, he had been ‘monasticized’, depriving him of the friendships (and their converse), resources, and able pupils that he had latterly enjoyed at the Aachen court. In the very different and initially apparently unwelcome setting of his new home, his correspondence may well have served a deepened psychological need. Yet the continuities in his life are as recognizable as the discontinuities. When he wrote to King Charles from Tours in the winter of 796–97 he declared:

In the morning, when my studies shared the vigour of youth, I sowed in Britain. Now with my blood growing cold, in the evening as it were, I do not cease to sow in France. To me in my broken state of health, there is solace in the sentiments of St Jerome, ‘Almost all the physical virtues change in old men and, with the increase of wisdom alone, other characteristics decrease’; and a little later on, ‘Old age in those who equipped their youth with honourable skills becomes more learned with time, more expert with experience, wiser with the lapse of years, and reaps the sweet fruit of past studies’.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 25, pp. 66–67.

⁶⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 121, pp. 175–78, at p. 178.

Alcuin here, like Jerome before him, was making claims for the ageing and aged which have not readily been conceded in recent decades. He was also suggesting that neither 796 nor 786 had marked a fundamental change of direction: that however much knowledge he acquired, whether of the secular world and its affairs or of books and ideas, the purpose to which it was consciously directed and the use made of it, even in the face of failure, remained constant.

Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?

JANET L. NELSON

My title echoes Norbert Elias's *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, first published in 1969, but not translated into English, hence not widely known outside Germany, till 1983.¹ Though Elias's own focus was on ancien régime France and specifically Louis XIV, his book is important for all historians interested in elite formation, the construction of monarchic power, and the interdependence of ruler and elite.² There has been a good deal of debate among early modernists as to how far Elias was right to stress so unilaterally the downward cultural impact of the court on the conduct of elites and others, without acknowledging other civilizing pressures including upwardly active ones. Early medievalists may be unhappier still with so centrist a model for the plural foci of cultural activity characteristic of the worlds they study; they will certainly want to rethink Elias's term 'autocratic' as applied to the courtly regimes they work with; and they are likely to insist on interplay between centre and provinces, on multiple connections between provincial elites, and on impulses which—notably in the case of heresy in the Carolingian period—did not always travel via the royal court. Nevertheless, no one will dispute the usefulness of Elias's paradigm. Elias was much influenced by Max Weber, and from him too, earlier medieval specialists, dealing with a brand of patrimonial rulership in which charismatic traits were prominent, still have quite as much to learn as do early modernists.

¹ Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie*, Soziologische Texte, 54 (Berlin, 1969), translated as *The Court Society* by E. Jephcott (Oxford, 1983). I should like to thank Katy Cubitt and Elizabeth Tyler for their invitation to participate in an exceptionally well-organized and fruitful conference.

² For some reflections on Elias's impact, see G. Klaniczay, 'Everyday Life and Elites in the Later Middle Ages: The Civilized and the Barbarian', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by P. Linehan and J. L. Nelson (London, 2001), pp. 671–90 (pp. 671–75).

I want to argue that Charlemagne's court was a courtly society in three specific senses. First, and this was the first Elias insisted on, it existed in space, in a place and an assemblage of buildings. The king was the head of a household: an exemplary, ideal one, to be sure, in the sense that it expanded at assembly time to include the *populus*, who became part of the domestic order of the palace, but also spectators of it, imitating in their own homes what they saw at court, but also in fact a *domus*—a specific group of people inhabiting a particular living space.³ In Charlemagne's imperial years from 801 every winter save one was spent at Aachen. And according to the *Annales Regni Francorum* for 811, the holding of the great summer assembly at Aachen was *consuetudo*.⁴ Embassies were received there from Constantinople, Venice and Dalmatia, Baghdad and Jerusalem, Northumbria, Scandinavia, Saragossa, and Córdoba, from Slavs and Avars, and last but not least, from Rome: the pope came in person just after Christmas 804 to Aachen.⁵ These visitors were meant to be impressed by what they saw. Charlemagne had brought the treasures of the *regnum* to Aachen, including, from Ravenna, the equestrian statue of Theoderic which was re-erected near the palace.⁶ A whole area was created in the years after c. 790. It was designed as a court, with large public buildings, linked by a processional way. At the summit of the highest building, the King's *aula*, was set a bronze eagle with outspread wings, a potent symbol of imperial superiority.⁷ The palace attracted crowds of clients, litigants, seekers of justice,

³ Since writing the present paper, I have pursued these themes in three others: 'The Voice of Charlemagne', in *Belief and Culture: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. by R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76–88; 'Aachen as a Place of Power', in *Topographies of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by M. de Jong and F. Theuws (Leiden, 2001), pp. 217–41; and 'Peers in the Early Middle Ages', in *Laity, Law and Solidarities: Studies Presented to Susan Reynolds*, ed. by P. Stafford, J. L. Nelson, and J. Martindale (Manchester, 2001), pp. 27–46. In thinking about the meanings of a court, or *palatium*, in the earlier Middle Ages, I have found helpful (though I have sometimes taken a different tack) the comments of P. Depreux, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781–840)* (Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 9–39.

⁴ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 811, ed. F. Kurze, MGH, SRG, 6 (Hannover, 1895), p. 134.

⁵ For details, see *Annales Regni Francorum*, esp. s.a. 802, 807, pp. 117 and 123–24, describing the embassies and exotic gifts (including the elephant Abul Abaz) from Baghdad.

⁶ *Chronicon Moissiacense*, s.a. 796, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1 (Berlin, 1828), p. 302; Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, c. 94, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRL (Hannover, 1878), p. 338; see the important study of L. Falkenstein, 'Charlemagne et Aix-la-Chapelle', *Byzantion*, 61 (1991), 231–89 (pp. 247–48 and 250–51).

⁷ If we can believe the late-tenth-century Richer, *Historiarum libri IV*, III, 71, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SRG, 51 (Hannover, 1877), p. 111, 'aerea aquila [...] in vertice palatii a Karolo Magni acsi volans fixa erat'.

beggars, whores.⁸ There was a weekly market; there was a mint that in a political sense, if not in terms of volume of output, was the most important of the realm.⁹ Around the royal palace and the *cubiculum regium*,¹⁰ where Charlemagne and his closest entourage were lodged, there clustered the *mansiones* of the *ministri* and royal officers, the houses of the servants of all those officers, and the houses of the nobility. Notker has a story which may be apocryphal (he was after all writing seventy years after Charlemagne's death) but highlights the point I'm making. After praising the fine buildings built at Aachen by Charlemagne, following Solomon's example, Notker mentioned the *mansiones* of the men of various ranks: constructed all around the palace, large and lofty, but not so lofty as the King's residence, says Notker. Charlemagne, a clever chap (*peritissimus*), could look out from the windows of his apartments, over the *mansiones* of the nobles and see all they did, all their comings and goings, without any of them realizing it.¹¹

Thus, Charlemagne, having made his *sedes* the more or less permanent centre of an empire, was in a position to shape those who dwelled therein into a self-conscious elite. Einhard, who later in life would himself keep a townhouse at Aachen, described the place as bustling with *amici* and *ministri festinantes*. *Aulici, comites, actores, mansionarii, camerarii*, the officers of the count of the palace, were showing, and showing off, their new administrative talents.¹² Donald Bullough, writing of Charlemagne's *aula*

⁸ *De disciplina palatii Aquisgranesis* (?820), ed. by A. Boretius, MGH, Cap., 1 (Hannover, 1883), no. 146, pp. 297–98, translated in Nelson, 'Aachen', Appendix I. Cf. Depreux, *Prosopographie*, p. 21: 'la cour grouillait de monde'.

⁹ Cf. S. Coupland, 'In palatio nostro: les monnaies palatines de Charlemagne', *Bulletin de la société française de numismatique*, 41 (1986), 87–89.

¹⁰ Einhard, *Translatio SS Marcellini et Petri*, II. 1, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SS, 15.1 (Hannover, 1878), p. 245.

¹¹ Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, I. 30, ed. by H. F. Haefele, MGH, SRG, n.s., 12 (Berlin, 1959), p. 41.

¹² Einhard, *Translatio*, II, 3, 4; IV, 7, pp. 248 and 258 (the 'domus Einhardi'); cf. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 32, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRG, 25 (Leipzig, 1911), p. 37; K.-F. Werner, 'Missus – marchio – comes', in *Histoire comparée de l'administration*, ed. by W. Paravicini and K. F. Werner, Beiheft der *Francia*, 9 (1980), 191–239. J. Fleckenstein, 'Die Struktur des Hofes Karls des Grossen im Spiegel von Hinkmars "De ordine palatii"', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins*, 83 (1976), 5–22. B. Kasten, *Adalhard von Corbie* (Düsseldorf, 1986), pp. 72–79, gives good grounds for dating the *De ordine palatii* 'vor 814' (p. 76). Kasten, p. 79, following C.-R. Brühl, 'Hinkmariana I', *Deutsches Archiv*, 29 (1964), 48–77 (p. 54), argues that Adalhard wrote for Bernard of Italy. The strikingly prominent role of the queen described in c. 22, Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH, Fontes, 3 (Hannover, 1980), p. 74, might be linked with Bernard's marriage to Cunigund: a marriage arranged by Adalhard, according to the *Translatio sancti viti martyris*, ed. by I. Schmale-Ott, *Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Westfalen*, 41 (Münster, 1979), p. 38; cf. P. Depreux,

renovata before the Aachen period, and specifically of ‘those who wished to exercise influence on their infrequent visits to the palace’, suggested that the administrative skills on display were like those of ‘the old Colonial District Officers rather than the modern bureaucrat’.¹³ This must have been true *a fortiori* in the imperial years when there is some reason to think the permanent staff increased significantly. There were, for instance, nine new notaries at work at Aachen in the years from 801 onwards, compared to only ten notaries in all the years from 768 to 800, three of whom continued working in the years after 801.¹⁴ You could interpret that, bearing in mind the picture Einhard gives of an exceptionally busy Charlemagne, as suggesting an increase in the notarial personnel to keep pace with the increased volume of parchment work required in the imperial years.

The *aula renovata*, while not ceasing to be a *comitatus*, evolved into a court: a place of controlled and measured recreation and sociability. *Conversatio* (*conversari*) was the word Einhard used in the preface to his *Vita Karoli*: he would describe, he said, Charlemagne’s *conversatio*, he would repay the debt of his own *nutrimentum postquam in aula eius conversari coepi*.¹⁵ *Conversatio* meant more than a leisure activity; it entailed a whole way of life, and a moral training. This was what Einhard wanted to convey. It was also what Charlemagne himself, in passionately reforming mood, was explicitly concerned about in his later capitularies: what sort of *conversatio* do we have, he demanded to know, and what ought it to be?¹⁶

To some extent the answers in practical terms might have depended on the gendering of space at Charlemagne’s court. My impression is that women and men moved much of the time in separate ‘private’ spaces, but that they shared the great public spaces. Take swimming: Einhard says that love of swimming was the reason why Charlemagne built the palace at Aachen and stayed there more or less permanently during his latter years. Einhard describes ‘the crowd of *filii, optimates, amici, satellites, custodes corporis* who sometimes bathed with him, so that a hundred men or more would be in the water together’.¹⁷ Alcuin, in a letter written from Tours to his young ex-student Nathaniel c. 800, interestingly recalls the baths at Aachen when he explains the meaning of the draught of 153 fishes the disciples caught in the sea of Galilee following the

‘Das Königum Berhards von Italien’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 72 (1992), 1–25. See further Nelson, ‘Aachen’.

¹³ D. Bullough, ‘Aula Renovata: The Carolingian Court before the Aachen Palace’, in his *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 123–60 (p. 146). Having seen one or two District Officers at work in the 1960s, I find Bullough’s analogy strikingly apt.

¹⁴ See Nelson, ‘Aachen’, Appendices II and III.

¹⁵ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, preface, p. 2.

¹⁶ See Nelson, ‘The Voice of Charlemagne’, pp. 76–88.

¹⁷ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 22, p. 27: ‘ob hoc etiam Aquisgrani regiam extruxit ibique extremis vitae annis usque ad obitum perpetim habitavit’.

instructions of the risen Christ (John 21. 11): 'I remember talking to my lord David about the wonderful significance of this number, my heart hot with love, in the bath bubbling warm from the natural springs (*fervente naturalis aquae balneo*)'.¹⁸ This was *conversatio* all right, but in the case of the baths, one that excluded women.

Then there was the hall, and/or the courtyard, the locale of assemblies.¹⁹ *De ordine palatii*'s image of the court is datable to these years.²⁰ Its author was Adalhard, Charlemagne's cousin and adviser, on and off, since the beginning of his reign, and it was written (I now think) in 812/13, hence based on Adalhard's familiarity with Charlemagne's Aachen. Even if we discount the implied regularity of annual summer assemblies including aristocrats from all over the empire, the numbers implied would have run into several hundred, maybe sometimes reaching four figures. The *De ordine* is clear on the active participation in decision making of lesser as well as great ones. All became, as, say, at a modern U.K. party conference, if only for a few days, at once consciously active in policy shaping and representative of a wider community. These were all-male gatherings, exemplifying this patriarchal society.²¹ Through assemblies, the influence of the court and its political culture rubbed off on a wide male elite. In that sense, Charlemagne's court society included them all. In another sense, as a grouping with a more or less continuous existence over years, with ongoing shared activity through contact with the ruler himself, it was a more restricted cadre of *aulici*, denizens of the hall. Detailed identification of the personnel involved is elusive. We know something about a handful of Charlemagne's household officers, though less from the Aachen years than earlier, for the evidence of letters and poetry then becomes less rich. Still, among the fifteen lay aristocrats who appear on Einhard's list of the thirty witnesses to Charlemagne's will in 811, one, Burchard the constable, held, and another, Ottulf/Audulf the erstwhile seneschal, had held, high office in the imperial household.²² Surviving from

¹⁸ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 262, ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 420. Nathaniel's original name was Fridugis. Dümmeler dates the letter 798/803.

¹⁹ For such locales, and for the problems of determining who attended, see T. Reuter, 'Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth Century to the Twelfth', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by Linehan and Nelson, pp. 432–50 (p. 435).

²⁰ Nelson, 'Aachen'.

²¹ For an exquisite illustration of *laici* and *conjugati* in charge of secular matters, see the episode at the assembly of Attigny (822) described by Hincmar of Rheims, *De divortio Lotharii regis et Theutbergae reginae*, ed. by L. Böhringer, MGH, Concilia aevi Karolini, 4.1 (Hannover, 1992), pp. 141–42.

²² For Burchard, see *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 807, 811, pp. 124 and 134, and cf. Depreux, *Prosopographie*, p. 138; for Ottulf/Audulf, see *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 786, pp. 72–73, *Chronicon Moissiacense*, s.a. 805, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH, SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), p. 258, and cf. Depreux, *Prosopographie*, p. 227, n. 2, and D. Hägermann, *Karl der Grosse: Herrscher des Abendlandes* (Munich, 2000), pp. 482 and 576. For Audulf's position in Bavaria in the early ninth century and his cultural interests, see C. I. Hammer, *Charlemagne's Months and*

the Aachen years are only two royal judgements, which were made by Charlemagne acting with seven lay *fideles* in one case, eleven in another. The fact that the comital names listed are different in each document could suggest that panel selections were made to suit particular cases, and/or that comital personnel at court varied a great deal from time to time. The former possibility is likely in the case of royal *vassi*, who constituted a semi-permanent entourage.²³ The *consiliarii* who helped frame and draft policy remain shadowy figures, crucial though they must have been.²⁴ Amidst lesser (or simply more junior) lights, men like Wala, Adalhard's half-brother, or Riculf, Archbishop of Mainz, were surely among the most influential counsellors of the Aachen years. They figure prominently among the witnesses to Charlemagne's will.²⁵ On that occasion, these leading men and *their* entourages would have made up a hallful.

Then there was a park—useful if someone has given you an elephant, useful too for managing some of the local fauna, perhaps with a view to the sort of hunting that could involve the women of the court as well as the men.²⁶ Banquets, according to Einhard, happened quite rarely and always in moderation: Charlemagne himself seldom took

Their Bavarian Labours: The Politics of the Seasons in the Carolingian Empire, British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 676 (Oxford, 1997), pp. 33–43. For the chamberlain Meginfred, see below. On the cultural meanings of the 811 document, see M. Innes, 'Charlemagne's Will: Politics, Inheritance and Ideology', *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), 833–55.

²³ *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by E. Mühlbacher, MGH, Dip., 1 (Berlin, 1906), nos. 204, 216, pp. 273–74 and 288–89. For *vassi* in such a context in the earlier part of Charlemagne's reign, see D. Bullough, 'AlboinuS deliciOSuS Karoli regis: Alcuin of York and the Shaping of the Early Carolingian Court', in *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für J. Fleckenstein*, ed. by L. Fenske, W. Rösener, and T. Zotz (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 73–92 (pp. 84–92). For Alcuin as *consiliarius*, see J. Fleckenstein, 'Alcuin im Kreis der Hofgelehrten Karls des Grossen', in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times*, ed. by P. L. Butzer and D. Lohrmann (Basel, 1993), pp. 3–21 (pp. 9–12); and for the key administrative and cultural roles of the *capellani* as a group at court, see J. Fleckenstein, 'Karl der Grosse und sein Hof', in *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, gen. ed. H. Beumann, 5 vols (Düsseldorf, 1965–68), vol. 1, *Personlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. by W. Braunfels, pp. 24–50.

²⁴ P. Bernard, 'Benoît d'Aniane est-il l'auteur de l'avertissement "Hucusque" et du Supplément au sacramentaire "Hadrianum"?' *Studi medievali*, 39 (1998), 1–120 (pp. 55–61).

²⁵ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 33, p. 41.

²⁶ On royal parks (*brogili*) in general, see *Capitulare de villis*, no. 32, c. 46, MGH, Cap., 1, p. 87. As for Aachen, Falkenstein, 'Charlemagne et Aix-la-Chapelle', p. 252, asks where, if not in the park, did Charlemagne keep Abul Abaz? Cf. also K. Hauck, 'Tiergärten im Pfalzbereich', in *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 39–42 and 45–47. For a poetic depiction of the queen's role in a court hunt in the 820s, see Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hlodowici Pii*, ed. and trans. by Edmond Faral, *Ermold le Noir, Poème sur Louis le Pieux*, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Age, 14 (Paris, 1932), iv, lines 2362–503, pp. 180–91.

more than three drinks.²⁷ But the court poetry of the 790s gives a jollier impression. The poets also show women—the royal women (but presumably they had female attendants)—participating along with the menfolk.²⁸ Charlemagne's daughters are given particular prominence in poetic accounts of feasts. Maybe the hall did sometimes ring to 'the joyous singing of drunken magnates' imagined recently by the archaeologist Ross Samson.²⁹ Maybe it was all more decorous. A generation after Charlemagne's death, Dhuoda, who knew at first hand the Aachen of Louis the Pious, wrote of the *magna domus* in which there were many conversations: *collationes multae*.³⁰ Here the young *commilitones* would learn how to imitate the *maiores*, so that (I still quote Dhuoda) one day they too would be summoned to give counsel—for even the young, following the example of Samuel and David, if they were wise, might give faithful counsel among the great men, among those shining out in the court (*fulgentes in aula*).³¹ From the *De ordine palatii*, we know how the young *commilito* would get acquainted with some of the great household officers at court by accepting invitations to dinner in their *mansiones*.³² Did the wives and daughters of the *potentes* join such domestic occasions? Indeed was it precisely such occasions that caused anxiety to churchmen like

²⁷ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 24, pp. 28–29.

²⁸ For references, see J. L. Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne: A Case of Monstrous Regiment?', in Nelson, *The Frankish World: 750–900* (London 1996), pp. 238–39, and cf. J. L. Nelson, 'La cour impériale de Charlemagne', in *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (du début du IXe aux environs de 920)*, ed. by R. Le Jan (Lille, 1998), pp. 177–91 (pp. 189–90), for royal women processing with Charlemagne.

²⁹ R. Samson, 'Carolingian Palaces and the Poverty of Ideology', in *Meaningful Architecture*, ed. by M. Locock (Aldershot, 1995), pp. 99–131. Cf. the rather different view of S. Airlie, 'The View from Maastricht', in *Scotland in Dark Age Europe*, ed. by B. E. Crawford (St Andrews, 1994), pp. 33–46.

³⁰ Dhuoda, *Liber Manualis*, in *Manuel pour mon fils*, ed. by and French trans. by P. Riché (Paris, 1975), III. 9, p. 170. Dhuoda writes of her own marriage in *Aquisgrani palatio* on 29 June 824, *praefatio*, p. 84, with Riché's comment, p. 85, n. 2. *Pace* Riché, Introduction, p. 16, Dhuoda makes no explicit mention of the 'chapel'. According to the *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 824, Louis had summoned his *conventum* to Compiègne c. 24 June, and left straight away for a Breton campaign. Was he not present, then, at the wedding of Bernard and Dhuoda? Perhaps the annalist's words should not be pressed too hard. The distance from Aachen to Compiègne, some 300 km, would have taken several days to cover, even for the King and a small mounted entourage. For Dhuoda and her imagined audience, see J. L. Nelson, 'Dhuoda', in *Learned Laity in the Carolingian Era*, ed. by P. Wormald (Cambridge, forthcoming).

³¹ Dhuoda, *Liber*, III. 5, p. 156 (councils); III. 9, p. 170 (great ones); III. 11, p. 194 (dinners with *honesti sacerdotes*).

³² Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, c. 27, p. 80: *capitanei ministeriales* invite young palace *milites* to dine in their *mansiones*.

Alcuin, who worried about the moral tone of the *nobiles virgines* at court? Alcuin urged Gundrada, Charlemagne's cousin, *virgo clarissima*, 'Be an example of all virtue to the other young women (*virgines*) in the palace, so that they may learn from your holy *conversatio* how to guard themselves, or, if they should fall, how to rise again' (*Esto ceteris in palatio virginibus totius bonitatis exemplar, ut ex tua discant sancta conversatione se ipsas custodire vel cadentes resurgere*) and 'May they be noble in their conduct as they are noble by parentage' (*Sint nobiles in moribus sicut sunt nobiles ex parentibus*).³³ In this same letter, Alcuin asked Gundrada to put in a word on his behalf with Charlemagne 'to stop him being angry with his humble servant' (*ne irascatur famulo suo*) and to convince him that Alcuin had not been able to come to court because he'd still been genuinely ill. An accident of survival even suggests that Gundrada played a role in Charlemagne's last years that really was unusual (though not wholly unparalleled) for a woman. A charter for Corbie dated 813 survives in the original so the tironian notes (bureaucratic shorthand) survive showing which influential personage at court requested the grant: in this case the requestor is, so the MGH editor says, Gundradus,³⁴ but since no man of that name is otherwise attested around Charlemagne, could this be Gundrada, sister of Corbie's abbot? My colleague David Ganz thinks it may be (and I am very grateful for his opinion), but the jury is still out. The court, anyway, was a setting that allowed both men and women to shine, generally in distinct gendered ways, but in both moral and meritocratic senses. When Louis the Pious succeeded his father, it was not only his own sisters and half-sisters but Gundrada, too, who were expelled from the court for good.

Then, the Aachen church itself was a place for conversations: Alcuin unself-consciously recalled for Charlemagne some questions posed him at Aachen by *filia mea, famula vestra fidelissima*, evidently some highborn lady (not necessarily Charlemagne's wife Liutgard, as Dümmler suggested), about the meaning of certain psalms (for instance, with reference to Psalm 120. 6, how the moon, since cold by nature, could 'burn anyone by night'—Alcuin sounds a trifle impatient with this question), but he also recalled that the conversation was about the 'columns erected in that most beautiful work and wondrous church'.³⁵ That church was the setting for rituals in which, again, royal women took part, and presumably too the women of the court. Charlemagne himself describes a number of people ready to participate in baptisms: women as well as men were involved as prospective godparents. Charlemagne discovered, after personally testing the would-be sponsors, that they did not know the Lord's Prayer and

³³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 241, pp. 386–87, dated by Dümmler c. 801; cf. *Epistolae*, 62, pp. 105–06, to a similar *deo devota* at the court of Offa: Alcuin urges her 'that in the king's palace the devotion of a regular life should be seen in your moral conduct' (*ut in palatio regis regularis vitae devotio in tua videatur conversatione*), and asks her to 'greet the queen for me'.

³⁴ *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 218, p. 292.

³⁵ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 149, dated 22 July 798.

the Creed, hence had to go away, 'blushing deeply' (*valde erubescentes*), and make renewed efforts to learn them.³⁶

Should we 'buy' Louis the Pious's defaming of his father's court in the aftermath of its cleansing in 814, or the none too discrete allusions made at the monastery of Reichenau in the early 820s to Charlemagne's debauchery with concubines, or Einhard's hints, conveyed in the slippery word *contubernium*, that there was something suspect about the King's relationship with his own daughters?³⁷ How are we then to make sense of a charter dated 28 April 807, and issued at Aachen, in which Charlemagne grants to the monastery of Prüm lands forfeited by a man called Godbert 'for his incestuous and other illicit deeds'?³⁸ Either Charlemagne was an appalling old humbug, or those retrospective slurs on his *contubernium* (literally, 'shacking up [...]') with his daughters should be taken with a large pinch of salt.³⁹

But look at *contubernium* from another angle: co-residence and comradeship. My second point about the court is that it had an identifiable culture. It existed as a real community in several senses. Einhard's mention in the context of the Aachen church of janitors, 'members of the lowest ecclesiastical rank', who did not need to perform their tasks in *privatus habitus*, certainly implies that Charlemagne provided them with appropriate garb, but might even suggest that there was an official or public *habitus* worn by lay *ministri* as well.⁴⁰ In the late 820s, Einhard described how he planned a visit to the court of Louis the Pious and got up early in the morning *secundum consuetudinem*

³⁶ *De disciplina palatii Aquisgranesis*, no. 122, pp. 241–42. For women at baptismal rites, see further Ermoldus's account of the baptism of a Danish king, his wife, and their son, in 826: Faral, *Poème*, lines 2168–361, and cf. J. L. Nelson, 'Parents, Children and the Church in the Early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History*, 31 (1994), 101–02.

³⁷ Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne', pp. 238 and 240. Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by J. B. Bury, 7 vols (London, 1909–14), v, 303, clearly sensed an insinuation of incest: 'daughters [...] whom the father was suspected of loving with too fond a passion'. When I first picked up the insinuation again a decade ago, Guy Halsall kindly pointed to me that *contubernium* is sometimes used in Frankish legal contexts to denote a band of men, sometimes an illicit sexual relationship. Interestingly, Suetonius, as Einhard must well have known, already used both senses: the first in the *Lives of Augustus*, c. 89, and *Tiberius*, cc. 14, 56, the second in the *Life of Caesar*, c. 49, and cf. *Lives of Caligula*, cc. 20, 22, and *Nero*, c. 34.

³⁸ *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 205, p. 274.

³⁹ This means reading Einhard as slightly less of a straight apologist than Paul Dutton makes him in an otherwise very interesting discussion (which, however, ignores the insinuations conveyed in *contubernium*) in *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, NE, 1994), pp. 55–57.

⁴⁰ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 26, p. 31.

aulicorum.⁴¹ Stuart Airlie has commented perceptively on the special rhythms and experiences of court life implied here, and pointed to another passage in Einhard that evokes a similarly intimate, informal, yet seriously busy regime, with Charlemagne transforming his *cubiculum* into a tribunal, inviting in friends, count of the palace, and litigants to receive judgement while he was dressing and putting on his shoes.⁴² The bonds thus created did not die with death or distance: old *aulici* remembered in their prayers those whom they had served in *palatio*, and those with whom they had served. Shared experiences bound people together even after they had left the *aula*. Alcuin, in 800/801, hearing of the death of the chamberlain Meginfred, wrote to Charlemagne expressing grief at the loss of his, Alcuin's, *carissimus amicus*, risking, perhaps in that emotionally charged moment, explicit criticism of the Beneventan campaign that had been the occasion of Meginfred's death, and proposing *consilium* as a preferable alternative to *expugnatio*.⁴³ A few years earlier, Alcuin had written to Meginfred as 'dearest friend', confident that the chamberlain would share his misgivings about forced conversion of Saxons.⁴⁴ This was, surely, a relationship that meant much to Alcuin. It must have been formed at court, *inter alia* through shared *consilia*, that is, shared formulation of policy.

Shared participation in ritual was a feature of court life, and not only ecclesiastical ritual. The wording of the *Annales Regni Francorum*, if variety is read as signifying more than authors' stylistic preference, indicates a stronger emphasis on court ceremonial from the 780s onwards. In 785, for instance, an assembly is held at Paderborn *more solemni*, and in 788, Christmas is spent at Aachen *more solemni*. The reception of foreign envoys is described in more elaborate terms—*magnifice*, *honorifice*, etc.—and rituals of victory receive greater prominence, whether the victory is someone else's, as when in 798 Alfonso of the Asturias sends Charlemagne *insignia victoriae* after sacking Lisbon, or Frankish, as in 799 when the defeated Breton *duces* hand over their weapons on each of which their names are inscribed.⁴⁵ The fact that both passages quote classical authors (Florus, Tacitus) only enhances these gestures' Roman, hence imperial, tinge. In Charlemagne's imperial years, it is capitularies rather than annals which show the ritualization of assembly proceedings. Three-day penances smack of ecclesiastical

⁴¹ Einhard, *Translatio*, II. 1, ed. by Waitz, p. 245.

⁴² Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 24, p. 29; see above all S. Airlie, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–40)*, ed. by P. Godman and R. Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–204 (p. 195–96). Cf. R.-H. Bautier, 'La chancellerie et les actes royaux dans les royaumes Carolingiens', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 142 (1984), 5–80 (esp. pp. 9–12).

⁴³ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 211, pp. 351–52.

⁴⁴ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 111 (796), pp. 159–62.

⁴⁵ Paul Kershaw, 'Rex pacificus: Studies in Royal Peacemaking and the Image of the Peace-making King in the Early Medieval West' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1998), chapter 4. 3. 2, puts these classical allusions in a broader context.

councils, but now they involved laymen and -women too. Palatine officers and noble residents must have been regularly involved in the ritual cycle of the great church, which was not, *pace* a widely held misconception, a palatine chapel but the local church of the *vicus* of Aachen: Charlemagne himself took an especially keen interest in rituals of Christian initiation, as I mentioned just now. The congregation presumably included the denizens of Aachen's big houses, and not of the palace alone, perhaps, too, local residents (tradesmen, artisans, peasants from nearby villages).

Further, the court was a textual community.⁴⁶ Two snippets from the Aachen years illustrate this. First the letter sent by Fridugis-Nathaniel to *omnes fideles et domini nostri seressimis principis Karoli in sacro palatio consistentes*, about the substance of nothingness.⁴⁷ These *fideles* sound like laymen (Dümmler inferred *proceres*): evidently consumed by existential *Angst*, they had discussed 'for a very long time' whether or not nothingness was a kind of being, before deciding the question was undecidable. Fridugis's contribution has not impressed John Marenbon: 'it gives a distinctly unfavourable impression of the mental powers of its author' (basically Fridugis argued that every *nomen finitum* signifies something, *nihil* is such a *nomen*, and therefore 'nothing' must really exist). But Marenbon points out that 'negative concepts continued to perplex men at the palace even after they had digested Fridugis's opinions'.⁴⁸ Clearly the controversy rumbled on in the 820s. The sociological implications which Marenbon doesn't bring out (they were not part of his purpose) seem to me interesting: these men appreciated arguments of some sophistication, the stuff of *discutio* and *examinatio*, and the group interest also persisted over time. Perhaps, *pace* Walahfrid Strabo, we shouldn't be too ready to accept that Einhard was unique, indeed miraculous, in surviving at court through the watershed of 814.⁴⁹ The second snippet is a letter by the Irish scholar Dungal.⁵⁰ In 811 he wrote to Charlemagne to explain what eclipses meant: two had occurred the previous year, and it was being suggested that they had foretold the deaths of Charlemagne's children, the nun Rotrud and King Pippin of Italy. Dungal denied any such link. He set out, courtesy of Macrobius, the antique *scientia* which forearms one with *praescientia*, and explained the astronomical conjunctures that account for the phenomena.⁵¹ Dungal wished to please Charlemagne, and thus, though he addressed the

⁴⁶ Cf. B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy* (Princeton, 1983).

⁴⁷ Ed. by Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4, pp. 552–55.

⁴⁸ J. Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 62–66 (p. 63).

⁴⁹ Walahfrid, Preface to Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, p. xxix.

⁵⁰ *Dungali Scotti Epistolae*, no. 1, ed. by Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4, pp. 570–78, but for up-to-date commentary on the text and its manuscript transmission, see now B. S. Eastwood, 'The Astronomy of Macrobius in Carolingian Europe: Dungal's Letter of 811 to Charles the Great', *Early Medieval Europe*, 3 (1994), 117–34 (pp. 132–34).

⁵¹ Eastwood, 'The Astronomy of Macrobius', pp. 125–32, shows that Dungal understood his material well.

King alone, he surely didn't expect him to be alone when he read—or had read to him—this letter. Indeed, the assumption surely was that in flattering the science of his *palatini*, Charlemagne would reassure them at the same time. If you were Charlemagne in 811, or Louis the Pious in 837,⁵² and didn't want your court to become demoralized by portents, you found a learned man to offer an alternative, positive, explanation. Again, I suggest that this constitutes one further glimpse of a group of *aulici*, a court, that not only wished to see itself as learned but *was* so. As for the authors themselves, they wrote as much for each other as for any wider audience; but all those who wrote in Charlemagne's reign, including such luminaries as Benedict of Aniane or Adalhard of Corbie or Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, had close links with the court and wrote with an eye (or anyway half an eye) to court responses.

Classical lore or the firmly written rules of ecclesiastical observance weren't the only foundations on which the court audience based its collective consciousness. It was an aural community. Consider the implications of the Astronomer's statement that the names of the casualties at Roncesvaux were 'known to everyone'.⁵³ The Astronomer was writing in 840/41, after years of court service. The Roncesvaux disaster had occurred in 778. Unmentioned in the original version of the *Annales Regni Francorum*, it is described, perhaps not long after 814, in some detail in the revised version, where too, for the first time in these annals, and in this very context, appears the word *aulici*.⁵⁴ This suggests that the deeds and deaths of Ekkehard the seneschal, Anselm count of the palace, and Roland commander of the Breton March were preserved, wherever else, in the collective memory of the court. Ekkehard's epitaph preserves, uniquely, the day and month of the fatal encounter, 15 August, the Virgin's Assumption to heaven: a coincidence that, for contemporaries, juxtaposed the fallen *aulici* with early Christian martyrs.⁵⁵ Gratifyingly, there is confirmation of Anselm's court function in a charter of 775, while Roland appears as a *vassus* in Charlemagne's entourage in 772.⁵⁶ Office holders are named and identified in the revised version of the *Annales Regni Francorum*

⁵² Cf. J. L. Nelson, 'The Last Years of Louis the Pious', in *Charlemagne's Heir*, ed. by Godman and Collins, pp. 147–59 (pp. 148–49) (but wrongly dating the episode to 838, when there was an eclipse of the moon). Scott Ashley will soon publish a study of political readings of portents in this period.

⁵³ Astronomer, *Vita Hludovici*, c. 2, ed. by E. Tremp, MGH, SS, 2 (Hannover, 1995), pp. 67–68.

⁵⁴ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 778, pp. 50–53. On the two versions of these annals, with thought-provoking discussion, see R. Collins, 'The Reviser Revisited', in *Rome's Fall and After: Narrators and Sources of Barbarian History. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. by A. Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 191–213. I think Collins is right to question the traditional labels 'original' and 'revised', but I have kept them here simply for convenient reference.

⁵⁵ Hägermann, *Karl der Grosse*, p. 159.

⁵⁶ *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by Mühlbacher, nos. 110, p. 156, and 65, p. 95.

for 782, this time termed *ministri*: the chamberlain Adalgis, Geilo the constable, and Worad count of the palace.⁵⁷ There is diplomatic evidence, unsurprisingly, for the count of the palace.⁵⁸ Again in these same annals, an *aulicus* named Amalwin is reported as a *missus* given the sensitive task of taking Frankish hostages to Widukind and bringing Widukind to Francia.⁵⁹ A final appearance of the term *aulici* in these annals occurs under 796, in the significant context of the distribution of the fabled Avar hoard: 'a large part of the treasure was sent to St Peter, [. . .] the rest he distributed with a generous hand between his magnates and the *aulici* and the others serving in his palace.'⁶⁰ Now there was a bond of community at court.

Charlemagne is described, at Worms in 787, in the original version of the *Annales Regni Francorum*: he had just returned from a spell in Italy where he had been involved in complicated negotiations with the pope and with Duke Tassilo of Bavaria.

He summoned an assembly, and announced (*nuntiavit*; revised version: *narrando commemorasset*) to his higher clergy and his other leading men how everything had been managed in the course of his expedition. When he got to the bit where he explained what had been done about Tassilo, the king said he had foreseen that he must send *missi* and order Tassilo to carry out everything according to the pope's command and as was just, but that Tassilo, after promising on oath that he'd be obedient and faithful to the king, his sons and the Franks, and to come to his [Charlemagne's] presence [i.e. to present himself at Worms], had refused and scorned to come. The lord Charles, along with the Franks, saw what his rights were [. . .].⁶¹

This is to my knowledge a unique reference for Charlemagne's reign to a royal *adnuntiatio*, or speech, to an assembly whose core element was the court (the revised Annals say that the queen with her step-sons and -daughters and with the whole *comitatus* had already been at Worms before the assembly met there).⁶² From the ninth century, we have a few examples of such royal *adnuntiationes*. In style and content, they vividly evoke varying styles of rulership.⁶³ if only the words Charlemagne used in 787 had been preserved. But what can be guessed from this annalistic summary actually bears out the scene of community described in Einhard's picture of Aachen bathers: Charlemagne

⁵⁷ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 782, p. 61.

⁵⁸ *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by Mühlbacher, nos. 138 (781), p. 189, and 148 (782/3), p. 201.

⁵⁹ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 785, p. 71.

⁶⁰ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 796, p. 99.

⁶¹ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 787, pp. 76–78.

⁶² *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 787, p. 77.

⁶³ MGH, Cap., 2, ed. by A. Boretius and V. Krause (Hannover, 1897), nos. 204, 242, 243, and 268.

presents Tassilo not just as *his* enemy but as the enemy of the Franks, and he succeeds in getting the Franks to see ‘his rights’ as he does. In similar vein, Ermoldus depicts him addressing his *proceres* at Aachen as *nostro nutrimine freti*: ‘sustained by our nourishment’. Perhaps that too flattered the self-perception of courtiers with an apt metaphor—for court poetry suggests that *aulici* sat cheek by jowl with poets at banquets in the *aula* of David, the poets’ patron. Flytings,⁶⁴ more or less formal insults exchanged in a dispute, were parodied as a poetic speciality in a court that could represent itself as, so to speak, multinational even while it asserted its collective identity: you called the Anglo-Saxon a porridge-eater, the Scot a sot. You might tease a layman named Wibod really rather gently as a *membrosus heros* (‘brawny hero’), mollifying him in the next line by likening him to Vulcan and Jove (*et sua praecedat tumefactus pectora venter*: not necessarily such an awful insult, especially after a good dinner). Might Wibod be the Aquitanian count mentioned by the Astronomer?⁶⁵ And if so, might Theodulf’s mock trembling at Wibod’s menaces be an allusion to some now-irrecoverable relationship (friendly or otherwise) away from court? Alcuin calls another count *heros* (oddly, this count, Roger, is probably another of those counts mentioned by the Astronomer) without the least irony, and sends him a tiny mirror of princes.⁶⁶ All the poets describe the chamberlain Meginfred in flattering terms—he’s the man ‘who tells this one to come in, but that one to wait outside for a bit’⁶⁷—just as they flatter the steward Audulf/ Menalcas: he’s the man who comes from a *sedes pomiflua*, and provides porridge, intoxicating beverages, and a lot more good things besides.⁶⁸ Here Theodulf adds a jocular touch which may hint at something more serious: the steward *pistorum sive*

⁶⁴ The word is now, apparently, a scotticism; but for an Old English analogue, see the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*’s reference to a *gefilitfullic* council at Chelsea in 787: unlikely to have been the only contentious one, as observed by C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650–c. 850* (Lorsch, 1995), pp. 230–31.

⁶⁵ Astronomer, *Vita Hludovici*, c. 4, pp. 608–09.

⁶⁶ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 224, pp. 367–68.

⁶⁷ Theodulf, *Carmen* 25, lines 121–22, ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Poet., 1 (Hannover, 1881), p. 486; cf. Angilbert, *Carmen* 2, lines 63–66, MGH, Poet., 1, p. 361; Alcuin, *Carmen* 26, line 47, MGH, Poet., 1, p. 246. Extracts from these poems are translated in P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 157 (Theodulf), 117, and 121 (Angilbert, Alcuin). (The translations above are mine, however.) I think Godman, Introduction, pp. 10–13, and also in *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 68–70, exaggerates the ‘merciless’ and ‘deadly’ quality of Theodulf’s jibes: these are, after all, only poetic parodies of flytings which no doubt *were* sometimes deadly in Dark Age halls. To accuse Alcuin of liking porridge, especially when he’s admitted it, does not seem excessively cruel. Tensions and rivalries were sublimated in the literary games of this court society. For poets and sociability at court, see Fleckenstein, ‘Alcuin im Kreis der Hofgelehrten’, pp. 18–20.

⁶⁸ Theodulf, *Carmen* 25, lines 181–84, p. 487; Angilbert, *Carmen* 2, lines 68–70, p. 363; Alcuin, *Carmen* 26, lines 47–48, p. 246.

coquorum / vallatus cuneis, ius synodale gerit ('flanked by serried ranks of bakers and cooks, he maintains the sort of organization you find at an assembly').⁶⁹ Doesn't this suggest courses, rules, table manners?

Rules were needed, of course, because feasts were places where enmities, inflamed no doubt by the alcoholic beverages, found their voice. The poets' flytings stood in the place of other kinds of contestation within the ambit of Charlemagne's enormous power. The third and last aspect of the courtly society I want to consider is the contribution of aristocratic and regional rivalries to the enhancement of royal authority. 'Ambition to rule [...] undoubtedly suffers less acutely under the domination of a single one than under equality with a large number': not Adalhard nor even Regino of Prüm but Marmontel in the *Encyclopédie*, on 'les Grands', as cited by Norbert Elias.⁷⁰ Elias goes on, in his own voice, to point out individual differences, differences between provinces, differences between aristocratic levels and statuses: all these 'forced [les Grands] into an ambivalent situation shot through with repulsions and attractions both from above and from below [...]. The social organ which maintained these two functions of [noble] dependence and distance [...] was the court'. The beneficiary needless to say was the king. Now Louis XIV liked to imagine himself Charlemagne *redivivus*, but I am not such a bad historian that I would claim that Charlemagne wanted to be Louis XIV. Of course all such comparisons needed to be qualified by a three-line *mutatis mutandis*. Nevertheless, there is some evidence for Charlemagne exploiting the centripetal pull of the court to draw in the aristocracy, to play on their rivalries, to use shaming as well as reward, wrath as well as favour.⁷¹ His treatment of rival poets might even be seen as a transferrable model. The production of an epitaph for the pope was open to competition (Alcuin beat Theodulf),⁷² yet once these poets, established in provincial posts, came into fierce dispute over an issue of local political control, they again competed through pulling strings at court for Charlemagne's favourable decision (Theodulf beat Alcuin).⁷³ We know just enough about the lay aristocrats around Charlemagne to be fairly confident that he was able to attract them, or summon them, to court as and when he wished, and to keep their ambitions focussed there, on what he could give.

⁶⁹ Theodulf, *Carmen* 25, lines 183–84.

⁷⁰ Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 173.

⁷¹ This is a subject beautifully dealt with from the regional ends by K. Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Vienna, 1979). See now also the illuminating recent work of M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. chapters 6 and 7.

⁷² See S. Morrison, *Politics and Script* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 170–73, and pl. 172, showing the inscribed slab bearing the epitaph still in place at St Peter's, Rome; for the context, see D. Schaller, 'Vortrags- und Zirkulardichtung am Hof Karls des Grossen', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 6 (1970), 14–36.

⁷³ *Epistolae Alcuini*, nos. 245, 246, 247, and 249, MGH, Epp., 4, pp. 393–404; cf. the very helpful translations in P. E. Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ont., 1993), pp. 116–19.

Already in the pre-Aachen years, Tassilo of Bavaria had been drawn inexorably into Charlemagne's web. In 788 Tassilo, abandoned by his own people now 'more faithful to the lord king Charles' than to him, was brought before a Frankish assembly at the palace of Ingelheim, where 'he asked to be allowed to be tonsured and to enter a monastery and do penance for such great sins so that he might save his own soul'.⁷⁴ So far the so-called original version *Annales Regni Francorum*. Other contemporary annals add telling details: Tassilo was made to lay down his arms before meeting Charlemagne.

Then the king ordered him to lose the hair from his head. But Tassilo then begged the king with great prayers that he should not be shorn there in the palace on account of the shame and dishonour (*confusio* [...] *obprobrium*) which he would then be seen to have from the Franks.⁷⁵

Charlemagne graciously allowed the shearing to be performed in a nearby monastery. Six years later, there was a further show-trial before the Council of Frankfurt in 794, when Tassilo was brought out of his monastery and made to renounce all his ducal and familial rights on behalf of his children as well as himself. The cruellest cut was Charlemagne's presentation to him of the documentary record of his renunciation 'so that he could have it by him in his monastery'.⁷⁶ Already in 788, other Bavarians appear in the *Annales Regni Francorum* as Charlemagne's *missi*, his agents in the east, just as Bavarian ecclesiastics like Arn and Leidrad were drawn into Charlemagne's service on the clerical side.⁷⁷

A number of Charlemagne's preferred ways of doing can be found in his dealings with Worad, count of the palace, attested in charters from the mid-770s. Worad was one of the trio of court officers mentioned in the revised annals for 782.⁷⁸ The three were sent with a force of Franks and some Saxons against other Saxons, and were meant to mount a joint attack along with Theoderic, the King's cousin (*consanguineus*), and his men. 'But when they discussed matters among themselves, the three feared that if they had Theuderic with them in battle the renown of victory (*victoriae fama*) would be transferred to his name, and they there resolved to attack without him [...].' Disaster ensued:

⁷⁴ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 788, p. 82. See now the fine paper of S. Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne's Mastering of Bavaria', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 9 (1999), 93–120.

⁷⁵ *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 788, ed. by G. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1, p. 44. See now the brief but excellent discussion of M. Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft. Untersuchungen zum Herrscherethos Karls des Großen* (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp. 68–70.

⁷⁶ *Capitulary of Frankfurt*, c. 3, MGH, Cap., 1, no. 28, p. 74.

⁷⁷ Hammer, *Charlemagne's Months and Their Bavarian Labours*, pp. 31–52, offers a penetrating account of the political context.

⁷⁸ See above.

the loss to the Franks was greater than numbers alone: two of the three, the chamberlain Adalgis and the constable Gailo, four counts and as many as twenty other famous and noble men were killed as well as others who were in their followings and preferred to die with them rather than to live on after them.⁷⁹

The episode reveals much about rivalries not just among aristocrats but between *aulici*. The sequel is infamous: Charlemagne forced his Saxon allies to hand over 4500 other Saxons and had them beheaded on a single day. Having thus exacted revenge (*vindicta patrata*) the King returned to Francia. Revenge for so many Frankish noble lives was clearly essential,⁸⁰ but what of the survivor of the original trio, Worad? There is no further mention of him in this or any other source. Did he continue in office as count of the palace, I wonder, or did Charlemagne exact a special 'revenge' (demotion?) on him?

To see the court society at work during the imperial phase of Charlemagne's reign, join it in 802, the year when the lord Charles stayed at the Aachen palace 'peacefully with the Franks without any enemy' (*quietus cum Francis sine hoste*).⁸¹ First, attend the assembly in March, think hard about the great capitulary it endorsed, and reflect on the obligations incurred (your *regnum* needs you).⁸² Then follow the author of the Lorsch Annals (or possibly his informant) to Aachen in October, see *missi* of high rank reporting back on justice done, and listen with assembled 'dukes, counts, and the rest of the Christian people with the lawmen' (*duces, comites et reliquus christianus populus cum legislatoribus*) to the reading out of laws that will ensure justice in the future for *omnes homines, pauperes et divites*.⁸³ This collective and ongoing engagement of the elite was indeed *une mutation*—reversible, to be sure, but not for a long time after Charlemagne's death, and then only partially—arguably more significant than *la mutation féodale*, and certainly a very remarkable contrast to the later Merovingians. By

⁷⁹ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 782, pp. 61–63.

⁸⁰ For other later examples of Charlemagne's wrath and revenge in similar circumstances, see *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 783, p. 65 ('commotus'), 795, p. 97 ('hoc factum [...] in odium excitavit'), and 798, p. 103 ('graviter commotus'). My view of Charlemagne's depiction in these annals thus differs somewhat from that of G. Althoff, 'Ira Regis: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. by B. H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY, 1998), pp. 59–74 (pp. 64–65).

⁸¹ *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 802, ed. by G. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1, p. 38.

⁸² *Capitulare missorum generale*, MGH, Cap., 1, no. 33, pp. 91–100. See the classic paper of F. L. Ganshof, 'Charlemagne's Programme of Imperial Government', in his *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, trans. by J. Sondheimer (London, 1971), pp. 55–85.

⁸³ *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 802, pp. 38–39. See J. Hannig, 'Pauperiores de *infra palatio*? Zur Entstehung der karolingischen Königsbotenorganisation', *Mitteilungen der Instituts für österreichische Geschichte*, 91 (1983), 309–74; and for the regime's dynamic, P. J. Fouracre, 'Carolingian Justice: The Rhetoric of Improvement and Contexts of Abuse', *Settimane*, 42 (1995), 771–803.

the ninth century the Carolingian regime had established its distinctive legitimacy and could afford to mock the last of the long-haired kings.⁸⁴

The face of Charlemagne's kingship presented at assemblies, those expanded courts, was the face of *familiaritas*, as depicted in the *De ordine palatii*: of friendly conversations with those whom the King did not see often, of informal information gathering about frontier stability or about rivalries that the King could then defuse before they exploded in revolt.⁸⁵ The author of the Paderborn Epic apostrophized Charlemagne's

cheerful expression. His face is bright, its serene appearance
is always aglow, surpassing the sun with the eternal gleam of his kindness (*pietas*)
[. . .] the king excels in goodness all the kings of the world.
He bathes his dukes and counts in the brilliance of his great love
he is gentle to the righteous and displays good humour to everyone
[. . .] he is the first to enter where he wants everyone to follow him.⁸⁶

The classical rhetoric was not wholly deceptive, but it was one-sided. Theodulf wrote more truly, perhaps, if equally rhetorically, when he described the crowds pressing forward towards Charlemagne's residence as the door is opened: 'Although many want to enter, may only the few get in, those whom some kind of rank advances.'⁸⁷ True, not all *potentes* were *nobiles*, nor were all *nobiles* more than claimants to power. This was not the seventeenth century. Yet even the intimate scenes of Charlemagne's bathing *en groupe*, or hearing cases while putting on his shoes, should be read in the light of Notker's story about the King's secret surveillance from his high tower of everyone's comings and goings, and perhaps too in light of Saint-Simon on Louis XIV:

At his *lever* and *coucher*, at meals, in the Versailles gardens, he always looked about him, noticing everyone [. . .]. Nobles who showed themselves at court infrequently incurred his full displeasure. If one of them desired something, the king said haughtily: *I do not know him*—and such a judgement was irrevocable [. . .].⁸⁸

Charlemagne's was a world of limited resources and intense competition for them, whether in the form of wealth, office, or justice. The court was the distribution centre for all these goods. Access to it had a transformative effect: one that laymen and ecclesiastics, Franks and *extranei*, all understood. And perhaps no one better than Alcuin, whose more ephemeral works I've quoted from often in this essay. The compleat

⁸⁴ See J. L. Nelson, 'Bad Kingship in the Earlier Middle Ages', *Haskins Society Journal*, 8 (1996), 1–26 (pp. 4–5).

⁸⁵ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, cc. 35, 36, pp. 92–97.

⁸⁶ *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa*, lines 12, 24–34, in Godman, *Poetry*, p. 198, with translation (p. 199).

⁸⁷ Theodulf, *Carmen* 25, lines 65–66, p. 484.

⁸⁸ Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 197.

courtier, who exchanged York for Aachen, and was perhaps never happier than in his sweet dwelling there, gazed back nostalgically from Tours in the late 790s: 'In fields where sacred youth chased after stags / an old man, weary, now leans heavily on his staff.'⁸⁹ Alcuin felt himself grown old, and saw Charlemagne too growing old. Yet Charlemagne was just beginning a new phase of that extraordinary reign. Empire was yet to come, and the court was surely at its courtliest in the years at Aachen: a centre, now, of imperial government, the place where the King showed his familiar face and his face of power most effectively. Alas for us that Alcuin, who knew both David's love and David's anger, was no longer around to leave us through his letters and poems his unique entrée to that courtly world. *Nos miseri, cur te fugitivum, mundus, amamus?* ('We wretched ones, why do we love you so, world, fugitive as you are?') That indeed was the *envoie* of one who, having known both the joys and pains of the courtly society, felt more pang than solace at having resigned, or lost, his place in it.

⁸⁹ Alcuin, *Carmen* 23, lines 29–30, pp. 243–44; Godman, *Poetry*, p. 247, dating this 'elegy' to the late 790s.

‘A Place of Discipline’: Carolingian Courts and Aristocratic Youth*

MATTHEW INNES

Courts and the Correction of Sin

The king’s court is properly called a school (*schola*), that is a course of discipline, not because it consists solely of schoolmen (*scholastici*), men bred on learning and well trained in the conventional way, but rather a school in its own right, which we can take to mean a place of discipline, that is correction, since it corrects men’s vestments (*habitus*), their deportment, their speech and actions, and in general holds them to the norms of restraint appropriate to a good life.¹

In the political crisis of 858, Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims created a powerful image of the good court, to which all kings—and particularly the quarrelling Carolingians for whom he wrote—ought to aspire.² For Hincmar, the court was a

* An earlier version of this paper was given at the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, King’s College, London, December 1996; thanks are due to my audience on that occasion, and that at the York Alcuin conference.

¹ *Epistola synodi Carisiacensis ad Hludowicum regem Germaniae directa*, no. 297 (858), ed. by A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH, Cap., 2 (Hannover, 1897), pp. 427–41 (p. 436), trans. by C. S. Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 27–28.

² On the context and content of the Quierzy letter of 858 see J. L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 188–89; Nelson, ‘The Lord’s Anointed and the People’s Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual’, in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. by D. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 137–80 (p. 161) [reprinted in J. L. Nelson, *The Frankish World 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 99–131]; J. Devisse, *Hincmar, archevêque de*

microcosm of the polity as a whole. Morality at court was necessary to ensure order in the kingdom. Morality was to be ensured, in typically Carolingian fashion, through discipline, discipline to encourage *correctio*. An almost monastic self-control, which encompassed all aspects of external conduct and through their regulation ensured internal righteousness, had been expected of kings since the beginning of the ninth century; Hincmar urged that the court as a whole should demonstrate ‘norms of restraint appropriate to a good life’. This urging of restraint took its force from its context: Hincmar wrote because aristocratic discontent and inter-Carolingian rivalry were on the verge of boiling over.

These structures of thought were deeply embedded. Hincmar’s virtuous court was one half of a pair of powerful opposites through which Carolingian political commentators thought—self-control versus wilfulness, order versus disruption, morality versus sin. Personal immorality and a lack of self-control in the ruler were signs of wider disorder, stains which could spread and discolour society as a whole. Hence the great political crises of the ninth century gave rise to accusation and counter-accusation about the moral life of king and court. The dialectic of images of morality and sin, order and disorder, enjoyed such a hold because it rested on categories that were subjective—in short, that were debatable and therefore constantly debated. Courts were morally ambiguous places, populous and difficult to control. Discipline at court was particularly necessary because morality and order there were always under threat. In *On the Governance of the Palace*, a tract of advice for a young king which significantly concentrated on the maintenance of order at court as the key to order in the kingdom, an elderly Hincmar was himself to comment on the huge logistical and social problems of running a court. The central problem was the presence of large numbers of ambitious and uprooted young aristocrats, whom palace officials struggled ‘to manage and support without sin, that is without plunder or robbery’.³ It is with these dangers, and the efforts

Reims, 845–882, 3 vols (Geneva, 1976), I, 281–362. For Hincmar’s political thought see J. L. Nelson, ‘Kingship, Law and Liturgy in the Political Thought of Hincmar of Rheims’, *English Historical Review*, 92 (1977), 241–79, and for the wider context J. L. Nelson, ‘Kingship and Empire’, in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. by R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 52–87 [reprinted from *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 211–51], and H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspeigel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968). J. Fried’s important article, ‘Der karolingische Herrschaftsband im 9. Jht zwischen “Kirche” und “Königshaus”’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 235 (1982), 1–43, emphasizes the centrality of the court and the person of the king in Carolingian political thought.

³ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH, *Fontes*, 3 (Hannover, 1980), p. 83. There is a huge bibliography: see particularly J. Fleckenstein, ‘Die Struktur des Hofes Karls des Grossen im Speigel von Hincmars “De ordine palatii”’, *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins*, 83 (1976), 5–22; C.-R. Brühl, ‘Hinckmariana I’, *Deutsches Archiv*, 29 (1964), 48–77; J. L. Nelson, ‘Legislation and Consensus in the Reign of Charles the Bald’, in *Ideal and*

taken to counter them, and to inculcate 'norms of restraint' in those young aristocrats present at court, that this essay is concerned.

Courts, Youth, and Aristocratic Careers

The court was a sociological community, not a geographical place. Its composition ebbed and flowed to a seasonal rhythm, and the king's own physical location changed in similar time. At the core of the court, however, lay a well-defined group who saw themselves as *palatini*, even when they were not at court. Their social identity was defined by their membership of the community of the court, and the customs, habits, and obligations that they shared on account of this.⁴ The critical mass of the royal household, and the core group of those who were normally attendant on the king, were young aristocrats, those whom the elderly Hincmar called 'lads and vassals' (*pueri vel vassalli*).⁵

Entourages of young warriors were found at the core of great households, whether royal or aristocratic, right across early medieval Europe. Hrabanus Maurus, adapting a Roman military manual for a Carolingian audience, noted that 'in our time, boys and youths are nourished in the houses of princes'.⁶ Martin Heinzelmann has recently shown

Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed. by P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 202–27; B. Kasten, *Adalhard von Corbie* (Düsseldorf, 1986), pp. 72–79. Regardless of the extent to which Hincmar drew on an earlier work of Adalhard's, the text as it stands is Hincmar's.

⁴ On the court as a sociological entity, see S. Airlie, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–40)*, ed. by P. Godman and R. Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–204, and J. Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, vol. 1, *Grundlegung: Die karolingische Hofkapelle*, Schriften der MGH, 16.1 (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 231–39. On Carolingian courts see Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice'; J. Fleckenstein, 'Karl der Grosse und sein Hof', in *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, gen. ed. W. Braufels, 4 vols (Düsseldorf, 1965), III, 24–50; D. Bullough, 'Alboinus deliciosus Karoli regis: Alcuin of York and the Shaping of the Early Carolingian Court', in *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für J. Fleckenstein*, ed. by L. Fenske, W. Rösener, and T. Zott (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 73–92; D. Bullough, 'Aula Renovata: The Carolingian Court before the Aachen Palace', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 71 (1985), 267–301 [reprinted in D. Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 123–60]; *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (du début du IXe aux environs de 920)*, ed. by R. Le Jan (Lille, 1998), particularly the essays of Nelson and Zott.

⁵ Hincmar, *De ordine palatti*, ed. by Gross and Schieffer, p. 83.

⁶ Hrabanus: E. Dümmeler, 'De procinctu Romanae militia', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 3 (1872), 443–52 (p. 444). For the practice see T. Charles-Edwards, 'The Distinction between Land and Moveable Wealth in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Medieval Settlement*, ed. by P. H.

how, after the decline of institutionalized schooling in fifth- and early-sixth-century Gaul, the practice of commanding young males into the household of a powerful patron, round about the onset of adolescence, became the norm, the sons of the aristocracy tending to find their way to Merovingian royal courts. We should never forget the anonymous mass of such youngsters at court, like those who earned Dagobert I the title 'nurturer of the Franks' (*enutritor Francorum*): those of whom we know tend to have made a fairly effortless slip into high ecclesiastical office at some stage in their careers, but there is very little that suggests a significant structural difference between the career paths of the Merovingian ecclesiastical and secular elites. The young aristocrats at the Merovingian court constituted a *schola*, in contemporary usage a body of men bound together by a common set of rules. The Merovingian court *schola* adapted the insignia for the late Roman Imperial bodyguard, with royal gifts of sword belts and associated attachments serving as badges of membership.⁷

The key period in the formation of the Carolingian royal court came in the middle decades of the eighth century. Pippin, the first Carolingian king, had been brought up (*enutritus*) by the monks of St-Denis, but he had his sons brought up at court alongside other youngsters, relatives, and the sons of political allies.⁸ The ninth-century *Life* of Benedict of Aniane, son of a count from the Montpellier region who later became a monk and abbot, gives a clear insight into the kind of career followed by these aristocratic youths at court:

Sawyer (London, 1976), pp. 180–87; Bullough, 'Alboinus'; C. Dette, 'Kinder und Jugendliche in der Adelsgesellschaft des frühen Mittelalters', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 76 (1994), 1–34. I am also grateful to Guy Halsall for showing me an unpublished paper, 'Growing up in Merovingian Gaul'.

⁷ See Martin Heinzelmann, 'Studia sanctorum: Éducation, milieux d'instruction et valeurs éducatives dans l'hagiographie en Gaule jusqu'à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne', in *Haut Moyen Age: études offerts à P. Riché*, ed. by M. Sot (La Garenne-Colombes, 1990), pp. 105–38; P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West*, trans. by J. Contreni (Columbia, 1976), pp. 236–46; R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 213–16; for political implications see I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 481–751* (London, 1993), pp. 146–52, and P. Fouracre and R. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France* (Manchester, 1996), p. 126, n. 196, where they note the force of 'nourishing' as a political bond. For Dagobert, *Liber Historiae Francorum*, c. 42, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH, SRM, 2 (Hannover, 1888), p. 314. Note too that the ritual of giving offspring to the Church as child oblates rested on a similar pattern of commendation into another household at around the age of seven: Mayke De Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 198–219.

⁸ Pippin: *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by E. Mühlbacher, MGH, Dip., 1 (Berlin, 1906), Pippin charter nos 8, 12.

[Benedict] spent his boyhood years in the palace of the glorious King Pippin and his queen, raised among the students there; the youth was esteemed by his fellow soldiers for he was fast and useful for everything, and, after a while, received the office of butler.⁹

Benedict, like his Merovingian predecessors, later entered the Church, hence the production of his *Life*. After around 800 we have very little of this kind of hagiographical material, with the exception of the biographies of Adalhard and Wala, Charlemagne's cousins. Nonetheless, it is clear from literary sources—poetry, polemic, moral tracts—that young male aristocrats continued to be brought up at court in the ninth century.¹⁰ By the end of the eighth century other boys, from less exalted social backgrounds, could find themselves at the court too, but they came by a less direct route and so perhaps arrived there around the onset of adolescence—Einhard, for example, from a well-to-do background but no better, was sent to the monastery of Fulda after infancy, and progressed from there to be 'nourished' at the court of Charlemagne.¹¹

We must acknowledge the variety of paths by which youths could reach court. Some were clerics seeking patronage and further education, some talented laymen, some great nobles. The time scales of the careers of different youths varied. The group that we are well informed about are the palace chaplains, career ecclesiastics who had mostly been commended to the Church as infants, but came to spend time at court as preparation for high office. This notoriously ambitious bunch were always ready to pull in favours and attempt to manoeuvre themselves into a juicy bishopric or abbacy if one became vacant. Hincmar of Rheims, for example, had spent a considerable stint at court in the 830s

⁹ Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, cc. 1–2, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SS, 15.1 (Hannover, 1887), p. 201, using the translation of P. Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization* (Peterborough, Ont., 1993) pp. 158–59.

¹⁰ Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita Adalardi*, ed. by G. Pertz, MGH, SS, 2 (Hannover, 1829), p. 525. Wala: Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ed. by Pertz, MGH, SS, 2, pp. 534–35. On the making of the Carolingian court, see Bullough, 'Alboinus' and 'Aula Renovata', and P. Riché, 'La renouveau culturel à la cour de Pépin III', *Francia*, 2 (1974), 59–70. It is not clear to me why the quality of the evidence changes towards the end of the ninth century: before then we meet a steady trickle of aristocrats undergoing a religious and/or political crisis in mid-life, embarking on an ecclesiastical career and being sainted, their *Lives* giving an insight into secular youth at court. It is a moot point whether it is merely changing perceptions of sanctity (Carolingian churchmen as a rule were not sainted and did not have *vita* written) or changes in ecclesiastical and monastic recruitment (which may have made it harder for laymen to shift in mid-life to an ecclesiastical career) that make such individuals far less visible in ninth-century sources. For the evidence for ninth-century kings and aristocrats undergoing 'career crises' but remaining kings and aristocrats, see J. L. Nelson, 'Monks, Secular Men and Masculinity, c. 900', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. M. Hadley (London and New York, 1999), pp. 121–42.

¹¹ Charlemagne as Einhard's *nutritor*: Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, Preface, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRG, 25 (Leipzig, 1911), p. 1.

under Louis the Pious before finally getting the plum see of Rheims from Charles the Bald, whilst Lupus of Ferrières received his abbacy in a similar manner.¹² But the palace clerics were outnumbered by their secular kinsmen, who reached the court on a variety of paths. Nobles like Adalhard and Wala, relatives of the Carolingians, were brought up alongside their royal cousins from a very early age, receiving their basic education at court; those of a more humble background like Einhard arrived at court in adolescence. Royal gifts, particularly of swords and sword-belts, continued to denote membership of the court, but took on a wider significance as the sword and sword-belt came to be the badges of elite warrior status, and investiture with a sword became the male rite of majority; clothing expressed status for lay nobles just as much as monks, and it was presumably these courtly insignia that Hincmar was thinking of when he remarked that the court was responsible for the correction of men's *habitus*.¹³

The vocabulary used by the sources to describe this time at court is far from consistent, for early medieval writers inherited a vocabulary of biological and chronological stages—infancy, adolescence, and so on—which fitted these contemporary practices only loosely, precisely because contemporary practices were determined socially, not by chronology or biology. The concept of ‘nourishing’, reflecting the strength of the bond between youths and patrons, was pervasive; the youths themselves were described as *pueri*, literally ‘boys’ or ‘lads’. This terminology emphasized the continued dependence of young aristocrats on their master and their lack of full adult status, presenting youth as a stage of transition.¹⁴ The most vivid statement of these patterns comes in a work of imaginative literature, the surviving Latin version of the heroic poem *Waltherius*, written some time between the beginning of the ninth century and the beginning

¹² See Fleckenstein, *Hofkapelle*, pp. 72–73.

¹³ See R. Le Jan, ‘Frankish Giving of Arms and Rituals of Power: Continuity and Change in the Carolingian Period’, in *Rituals of Power from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by F. Theuws and J. L. Nelson (Boston, 2000), pp. 281–309; see also K. Leyser, ‘Early Medieval Canon Law and the Beginnings of Knighthood’, in *Institutionen, Gesellschaft und Kultur*, ed. by Fenske, Rösener, and Zott, pp. 549–66; J. L. Nelson, ‘Ninth-Century Knighthood: The Evidence of Nithard’, in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. by C. Harper-Bill and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 255–66 [reprinted in her *The Frankish World*, pp. 75–88]; D. Barthélémy, ‘La chevalerie carolingienne: prélude au XIe siècle’, in *La royauté et les élites*, ed. by Le Jan, pp. 159–76; and R. Le Jan, ‘Apprentissages militaires, rites de passage et remises d’armes au haut Moyen Age’, in *Initiation, apprentissages, education au Moyen Age* (Montpellier, 1993), pp. 211–32.

¹⁴ On the vocabulary of the sources, see M. De Jong, ‘Growing up in a Carolingian Monastery: Magister Hildemar and His Oblates’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 9 (1983), 99–128 (pp. 102–03); Bullough, ‘Alboinus’, p. 91. Cf. J. L. Nelson, ‘Parents, Children and the Church in the Early Middle Ages’, *Studies in Church History*, 31 (1994), 81–113 (pp. 99–100), on the importance of the stage after physical and legal maturity but before full adult status. Once again, I am grateful to Guy Halsall for sharing his thoughts with me.

of the tenth.¹⁵ It tells of the deeds of the young Waltharius, heir to the kingdom of the Aquitainians, who is commended to Attila as a boy. Waltharius ‘in the bloom of his strength’ was well treated by Attila, who:

made the best provision for the [. . .] boys
with orders to treat them as if they were his own.

[. . .]

He taught them every skill himself,
but mostly those useful in the great game of war.
The young boys grew older, and learned well,
were stronger than the strong and wiser than the wise,
until each one of them had outstripped the Huns.
Attila made them military commanders,
and they had earned it, for, whenever he wages war,
they were the ones who would always shine.¹⁶

Waltharius’s career was thus remarkably like that of Benedict of Aniane at the Carolingian court. The poet, moreover, made it clear that this youthful, court-based stage of Waltharius’s career ended with a gift of lands, political command, and marriage. Waltharius, resisting Attila’s offer of lands and a wife for his own secret reasons, compared the life of the youth at court with that of the married noble with responsibility for a household and estates.¹⁷ In the second half of the eighth century, Frankish Latin described this shift as one from the status of a *vassus* to that of a *fidelis*, although by the middle of the ninth century *vassi* held grants of lands and were not of any particular age.¹⁸ The shift did not take place at a defined age or point of biological development, but was determined by the timing of marriage and royal patronage. There must have been Carolingian *pueri* in their late twenties anxiously waiting to contract a marriage and receive a gift of land or office. Even the demons who haunted the ninth-century world followed a similar career pattern—it was unquestioned that demons, like

¹⁵ I do not here enter into the controversy over the date (ninth century or early tenth?) of the *Waltharius*.

¹⁶ *Waltharius*, lines 97–108, ed. K. Strecker, MGH, Poet., 6.1 (Hannover, 1951), pp. 24–85, I use the translation (with facing Latin text) of B. Murdoch, *Waltharius*, Scottish Papers in Germanic Studies, 9 (Glasgow, 1989), pp. 48–49.

¹⁷ *Waltharius*, lines 142–68, trans. by Murdoch, p. 50.

¹⁸ See the important discussion of Bullough, ‘*Alboinus*’; cf. also C. Odegaard, *Vassi and Fideles in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1945), and S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals* (Oxford, 1994). Note too that in this period when *vassus* first began to be used of retainers who have been granted estates and are not resident at court, it became necessary to distinguish the new group of *vassus dominici* from the *vassus* at court—see *Annales Laureshamenses*, ed. by G. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1 (Hannover, 1826), s.a. 802, p. 39, on the *pauperiores vassi de infra palatio*.

saints, followed aristocratic lifestyles. A possessed peasant girl from the village of Höchst, on the lower Main, had an exorcism performed on her by a priest. A demon called Wiggo, speaking noble Latin rather than the girl's peasant Germanic, spoke through her lips. 'I am an officer and retainer of Satan, and for a very long time I served as gatekeeper of Hell, but for the last few years I have, with eleven fellows, ravaged the kingdom of the Franks.'¹⁹

In a celebrated article, Georges Duby drew attention to the prominence of bands of young knights in twelfth-century France, and the significance of these groups for the flavour of aristocratic culture and society.²⁰ The time spent by young laymen in royal and aristocratic households played a similar role in creating the ethos of Carolingian society. For one thing, this stage in the life cycle was vital in engendering adult social roles. Charlemagne, for example, had his sons and daughters receive the earliest stages of their education together, but as they reached youth, they were separated and trained in gendered pursuits—weaving and embroidery, archetypal women's work, for the daughters, whilst the sons received a 'Frankish education' in riding, hunting, and fighting alongside their aristocratic peers.²¹ Youth itself—in the sense of a transitional stage spent away from the parental household—was probably a gendered construct, something which only happened to boys. Certainly there is very little evidence for aristocratic daughters spending such a period, rather than progressing straight from parental to conjugal household. Whilst there are fragments of evidence that suggest that young women could present themselves at court, such evidence is overwhelmingly concerned with female members of the royal kin. Aristocratic daughters may have visited court with the remainder of their families on great social and political occasions, but there is little to suggest permanent residence.²² Ideological investment in chastity outside of marriage with a particular emphasis on female virginity, allied to the domestification of women within familial space (which even encompassed nuns, as brides of Christ), made the placing of young women outside paternal and conjugal authority morally and socially suspect. Einhard, indeed, felt compelled to excuse Charlemagne's politically motivated insistence on keeping his daughters and granddaughters at Aachen on account of his paternal love for them. The sexual scandals arising from these arrangements graphically show the dangers of allowing unmarried women to become key actors in a public domain in this society, even when that public domain was simultaneously familial for

¹⁹ Einhard, *Translatio SS Marcellini et Petri*, III. 14, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SS, 15.1, p. 253; I have adapted Dutton's translation, *Carolingian Civilization*, p. 225.

²⁰ G. Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society: Northwestern France in the Twelfth Century', in his *The Chivalrous Society* (London, 1977), pp. 211–20.

²¹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 19, ed. by Holder-Egger, p. 23.

²² Cf. Nelson's chapter in this volume, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?', for a different interpretation to mine. I must thank both Janet Nelson and Julia Smith for discussion of this issue.

these women. The very fact that Einhard felt that special pleading for such arrangements was needed is telling.²³

Youthful time at court may have played a central role in the construction of aristocratic masculinity. Certainly playing with swords and horses were the characteristic pastimes of youths. Hence when Charles, son of Charles the Bald, was fatally injured following an accident whilst ‘enjoying some horseplay with other youths of his own age’, accidentally wounded by the sword of one of his companions. Charles’s case also shows the strength of bonds between those who spent youth together, for he attempted to conceal his misfortune to protect the friend who was responsible for the accident.²⁴ It was in youth that male sexuality was shaped, too. Thus another of Charles the Bald’s sons, Carloman, was fatally wounded when, ‘because he was a young man, he was pursuing a girl’ and tried to ride through the doorway of her father’s house, smashing his shoulder on the lintel.²⁵ Most male Carolingians seem to have enjoyed sexual liaisons—often long-term and stable relationships—outside marriage in their youth, and there are hints that other male aristocrats did likewise.²⁶ At the Carolingian court, youth was recognized as a distinct period of transition and transgression spent away from the familial household in which adolescent males were prepared for their adult roles through discipline and example.²⁷ It is significant that royal women, as mistresses of the royal household, enjoyed a particularly close bond to aristocratic youths from Balthild in the seventh century to Judith in the ninth. This bond was at least potentially morally ambivalent, and helps explain the repeated accusations of adultery levied against queens in times of crisis, and the force of complaints about sexual immorality at court. The connection is quite explicit in some of the criticisms made of Louis the Pious’s court in the 830s.

²³ See Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 19, ed. by Holder-Egger, p. 23, and for Charlemagne’s management of his daughters and granddaughters Nelson’s discussion, ‘Women at the Court of Charlemagne: A Case of Monstrous Regiment?’, in her *The Frankish World*, pp. 223–42 [reprinted from *Medieval Queenship*, ed. by J. C. Parsons (Stroud, 1993), pp. 43–61]; Nelson, ‘La cour impériale de Charlemagne’, in *La royauté et les élites*, ed. by Le Jan, pp. 177–91.

²⁴ See Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, s.a. 870, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH, SRG, 50 (Hannover, 1890), p. 101.

²⁵ See *Annales Vedastini*, s.a. 884, ed. by B. von Simson, MGH, SRG, 12 (Hannover, 1909), p. 56.

²⁶ One thinks of Louis the Pious and, notoriously, Lothar II; for an aristocrat involved in a similar relationship—significantly with the sister of the woman with whom he eventually contracted a marriage—see Hincmar, *Epistolae*, ed. by E. Perels, MGH, Epp., 8.1 (Hannover, 1939), no. 136.

²⁷ Pace the comments of P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (London, 1973), on the lack of any real sense of difference between adults and non-adults in the medieval world; for early medieval critics of Ariès see Nelson, ‘Parents, Children and the Church’; R. Meens, ‘Children and Confession in the Early Middle Ages’, *Studies in Church History*, 31 (1994), 55–65; De Jong, ‘Growing up in a Carolingian Monastery’.

Agobard of Lyons charged that Judith was demonstrating a lack of self-control inappropriate for her position, closer in behaviour, as in age, to the youths of the court than her husband the emperor: 'the lady of the palace is delivered up to boyish games'. This was a telling reminder that this transitional period in the life cycle was for men only.²⁸

But Carolingian courts were not only places at which aristocratic youths were prepared for their adult roles. Carolingian sources, in a striking contrast to those from the Merovingian period, portrayed the court as a place of moral instruction. Thus the ninth-century writer Ermanrich of Ellwangen could eulogize the virtues of the abbot and courtier Grimald: 'from the first flower of youth you were nurtured in excellent manners among the courtiers of the blessed emperors. From them you learned not only the whole range of school subjects, but also the norm of right living'.²⁹ Similarly, one ninth-century mother, Dhuoda, hoped that her son would learn virtue at court. Dhuoda wrote a manual of advice for her son, William, commended into the care of Charles the Bald at the age of fourteen in 842, just as the hero Waltharius had been given into the care of Attila. Dhuoda stressed the need for William to cultivate wisdom and give good counsel, advising him to 'make every effort to associate not only with older men who love God and seek wisdom but also with youths who do so, for maturity is rooted in the flower of youth'. William was told:

as for the magnates and other counsellors—and all those like them who serve faithfully—show them your love, affection and service often. Do so to them together and individually, to whomever is important at court. For in a house as big as the king's there are, and have been, and will be—if the good lord so commands—many conversations. There, one who wishes can learn from others humility, charity, chastity, patience, gentleness, modesty, sobriety, discretion and other virtues, as well as the desire to do good.³⁰

²⁸ Agobard of Lyons, *Liber apologeticus*, in *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by L. Van Acker, CCCM, 52 (Turnhout, 1981), nos. 20–21, pp. 309–19. Bonds between queens and young nobles: Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne', pp. 233–34, with references. On Judith and her critics, see E. Ward, 'Agobard of Lyons and Paschasius Radbertus as Critics of the Empress Judith', *Studies in Church History*, 27 (1990), 15–25; G. Bührer-Thierry, 'La reine adultère', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 35 (1992), 299–312.

²⁹ Ermanaric of Ellwangen, *Letter to Grimald*, ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Epp., 5 (Hannover, 1899), p. 536, trans. and discussed by Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, pp. 29–30. For the Carolingian court as a place of education, see Riché, *Education and Culture*, pp. 236–46, and note the conclusions of Heinzelmann, 'Studia sanctorum', that the educative function of the court only emerges in Carolingian hagiography.

³⁰ Dhuoda, *Liber Manualis*, in *Manuel pour mon fils*, ed. by and French trans. by P. Riché (Paris, 1975), III. 9, p. 170; English trans. by C. Neel, *Handbook for William* (Lincoln, NE, 1991), and M. Thiebaux, *Dhuoda: Handbook for Her Warrior Son* (Cambridge, 1998). On Dhuoda, the fundamental study is J. Wollasch, 'Eine adlige Familie des frühen Mittelalters: ihre Selbstverständnis und ihre Wirklichkeit', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 39 (1957), 150–88; also

'Norms of Restraint Appropriate to a Good Life': The Court and Political Socialization

How were young aristocrats to learn virtue at court? There was clearly some formal instruction to be had at court. Boys and girls from the Carolingian family, their relatives, and even the sons of powerful aristocrats could learn the liberal arts there. Youths of William's age, however, did not receive a formal education at court, so much as edification, the inculcation of a set of norms, values, and models of conduct. This was not something separate from intellectual endeavour—Dhuoda saw the cultivation of wisdom and enlightened conduct as two sides of the same coin. But it was not only the possibility of conversing with intellectuals that made the court a centre for the inculcation of virtue: it was the imitation of models of behaviour, stressing self-control and spiritual endeavour, which was crucial.

For Notker of St-Gallen, writing in the 880s, the model king was to discipline youths at courts so as to teach them to pursue wisdom. Disciplining courtiers was a favourite pastime of Notker's semi-legendary Charlemagne, with humiliation through the public display of anger or ridicule the characteristic means of correction.³¹ In one of Notker's stories, Charlemagne returned from campaign and summoned into his presence the *pueri* whom he had commended into the care of the scholar Clement, asking them to show him 'letters and poems'. Charlemagne found that the *mediocres* and *infimi* were 'adorned with the condiments of wisdom' whilst the *nobiles* were fatuous and lazy. Charlemagne exhorted the youths at court to learn from the scholars there:

Then the most wise Charles, imitating the eternal Judge, placed those who had done well at his right hand and told them: 'I am most grateful, my children, that you have followed my commands to the best of your abilities. Now continue to study to attain perfection, and you will be rewarded with monasteries and bishoprics, and you will always be honourable in my eyes.' Then he turned with great severity to those on his left, and with a fiery glance which seemed to pierce their consciences, scornfully thundered out the following words: 'You nobles, you sons of the great, endowed with lands and high birth, you ignore my orders and, neglecting the study of letters, glory in idle games and lazy and inane play.' Having said this, he turned his august head and raised his unconquered right hand to the Heavens, and let forth an oath: 'By the King of Heaven! I think nothing of your nobility and your fine

P. Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 36–54; M. Claussen, 'God and Man in Dhuoda's *Liber Manualis*', *Studies in Church History*, 27 (1990), 43–52; M. Innes, 'Keeping It in the Family: Women and Aristocratic Memory, 700–1200', in *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700–1300*, ed. by E. van Houts (London, 2000), pp. 17–35.

³¹ On the interpretation of Notker, see M. Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past and Present*, 158 (1998), 3–36. See also H.-W. Goetz, *Strukturen der spätkarolingischen Epoche im Speigel der Vorstellungen eines zeitgenössischen Mönches: Eine Interpretation des 'Gesta Karoli' Notkers von Sankt Gallen* (Bonn, 1981), for Notker's thought world, esp. pp. 23–37 on the court.

looks, even if others admire them. You should know this for certain, if you don't make up for your earlier negligence by vigilant study, you'll get nothing good from Charlemagne.³²

Charlemagne was here a God-like figure, his verdict on the youths reminiscent of the Last Judgement. Notker, like Hincmar and others, stressed the edifying value of youthful time at court in this political prescription written for the guidance of Charles the Fat: Charlemagne's scolding had made youths at court apply themselves to the cultivation of wisdom rather than youthful games.

The use of humiliation as a means of discipline, of testing the mettle of youths and impressing a set of values upon them, is echoed elsewhere, notably in Paschasius Radbertus's account of the life of Wala, relative of the Carolingians, count, and later abbot. Wala had been brought up at court:

From boyhood he was devoted to liberal studies amid the youngsters of the palace, demonstrating strong nobility of manners and honesty of feeling. The Emperor [. . .] decided [. . .] that he should be humbled and forced back among the weaker ones. This action was not by chance, but by a dispensation of divine judgement, so that his tender age might be proven like gold in a furnace of trial and so that while still a youth he might learn not only to endure adversity with courage but also prosperity with calmness [. . .]. Entrusted under arrest to some magnates he was honourable and compliant. Although no neighbour accused him of crimes, although he was innocent and just, he was kept in subjection as though he was criminal.³³

Wala was then set to work driving a cart and two oxen, a humiliation indeed for the cousin of emperors, for this was archetypal peasant work. As Paschasius emphasized, it involved a damaging loss of status: Wala, meeting a peasant whilst out on the road driving his oxen, offered to swap his weapons and sword-belt, the badge of his nobility and membership of the royal household, for poorly made peasant gear, thereby demonstrating that he had learnt humility and passed the character test. Temporary expulsion from the court was here almost a rite of passage which enabled Wala to demonstrate his worthiness for an adult role.³⁴ The nature of the tasks set not only emphasized the suspension of normal social status, but also recalled Einhard's bucolic image of powerless Merovingian kings making a ritual progression in ox carts, a piece

³² Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, I. 3, ed. by H. F. Haefele, MGH, SRG, n.s., 12 (Hannover, 1959), p. 4. I have adapted the trans. by L. Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 1970). Cf. H. Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 32 and 91–94; McKitterick, *Carolingians*, p. 222.

³³ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ed. by Pertz, p. 35; trans. by A. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins* (Syracuse, 1967), pp. 99–100.

³⁴ Ibid. For discussion see Leyser, 'Early Medieval Canon Law', p. 554.

of mocking rhetoric which distorted, but was also based on, actual practice.³⁵ Paschasius was also explicit on the legal context, which invites comparison with legal rituals of humiliation and atonement which drew on a similar carnivalesque imagery of status inversion—notably the ritual of *harmiscara*, first attested in ninth-century capitularies and later diffused right across post-Carolingian Europe, which involved performing ridiculous acts at the ruler's whim, perhaps acting as a human horse, saddled backwards and thereby mocking claims to aristocratic status. *Harmiscara* was above all a punishment for political 'crime' and disloyalty, and a present audience at court were central to the practice; Wala's temporary disgrace may have been the result of his links to a faction at court which fell out of favour.³⁶ But in Paschasius's account, Wala's punishment was linked to his position 'amongst the youngsters of the palace' and Charlemagne's decision to test his mettle: political disgrace that it may have been, it was also possible to present it as a character-forming test which a young politician like Wala needed to pass. Compare Notker's story of Charlemagne secretly inspecting his camp whilst on campaign, an episode with many folklore and literary parallels, retold by Notker as a parable on the court as a place where nobles were tested and reminded of their fallibility. Charlemagne found the two young aristocrats entrusted with guarding his tent asleep, drunk. The following morning he held a public meeting, and asked the two nobles how a man who betrayed the king should be punished. They suggested the death penalty, before realizing Charlemagne's ruse, and got a public scolding to drive home the lesson. Notker reinforced the message by juxtaposing a story about two illegi-

³⁵ Cf. Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 1, ed. by Holder-Egger, pp. 2–4; on which see A. Gauert, 'Noch einmal Einhard und die letzten Merowinger', in *Institutionen, Gesellschaft und Kultur*, ed. by Fenske, Rösener, and Zott, pp. 59–72; H. Pirenne, 'Le char à boeufs des derniers mérovingiens: note sur un passage d'Eginhard', in *Mélanges Paul Thomas* (Bruges, 1930), pp. 555–60; and most recently A. C. Murray, 'Post vocantur Merohingii: Fredegar, Merovech and "Sacral Kingship"', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. by Murray (Toronto, 1998), pp. 121–52 (pp. 129–32). I owe this point, and references, to Paul Barnwell. The multivalence of possible interpretations of Einhard's passage need to be taken on board: the evidence in Murray and in the discussion in *Franks and Alamanni in the Migration Period – An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by I. Wood (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 130–31, cumulatively suggests that ox carts may have been a mode of transport primarily associated with noble women, and that Einhard was therefore emphasizing the effateness of the last Merovingian.

³⁶ For the politics, see Leyser, 'Early Medieval Canon Law', p. 554, and cf. the other examples assembled by Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne', pp. 233–34. On *harmiscara* see M. De Jong, 'Power and Humility in Carolingian Society: The Public Penance of Louis the Pious', *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), 29–52 (pp. 46–49); there is much post-Carolingian material on the diffusion of the rite which deserves further study. See now J.-M. Moeglin, 'Harmiscara, Harmschar, hachée – le dossier des rituels d'humiliation et de soumission au Moyen Age', *Bulletin du Cange*, 54 (1996), 11–63; J.-M. Moeglin, 'Pénitence publique et amend honorable au Moyen Age', *Revue historique*, 298 (1997), 225–65.

timate sons of peasant women, who distinguished themselves on campaign and were rewarded.³⁷ The model Carolingian king disciplined his aristocracy in its youth at court.

Imposing discipline involved inculcating a well-developed sense of hierarchy underpinned by a formal etiquette of rank order. The manners and conventions of Carolingian court life remain difficult to illuminate, but once again Notker allows us to penetrate some of the shadows. Notker's description of meals at court uses his hallmark humour to make a point about the relationship between etiquette and hierarchical order:

When Charlemagne ate, he was waited on by the leaders, tyrants and kings of diverse peoples. They ate when he himself had finished, and they were served by counts, prefects and those of noble rank. When these last came to the end of their meal, then the soldiers and scholars of the court took their meal. After these came the masters of the court officials, then the officials, then the helpers of these officials. The last on the list received nothing to eat before midnight.³⁸

Similarly, on Easter Sunday the Emperor, in a Christomimetic ceremony, gave gifts 'according to individual vocation' to 'each and every one who served in the palace or was a member of the royal household': the most noble got sword-belts and most precious vestments from the Emperor; the lesser ranks received Frisian cloaks; those who served in the stable or kitchen were given garments or knives. These gifts had real significance: swords demonstrated aristocratic warrior status where knives symbolized domestic service. They mapped out in the most graphic terms a clear hierarchy with its own minute variations of rank.³⁹

Every social hierarchy has its codifier and guardian, and it was almost inevitably Hincmar who lovingly recorded the intricacies of the divisions of the royal household in painstaking detail. Hincmar's calculus of rank began by distinguishing between great officials (men like the chamberlain and the count of the palace), their underlings (porters, dispensers of the purse), and the subordinates of the underlings (keepers of the kennels and the like). Before allocating a final place to each and every *palatinus*, Hincmar made a further set of distinctions, between 'those servants who are without special responsibilities', 'young men in various offices', and 'lads and vassals'.⁴⁰ The hierarchy of courtly rank thus defined even the position of aristocratic youths at court, whilst the

³⁷ Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, II. 2–3, ed. by Haefele, pp. 51–52. For the significance of campaigning in Notker, Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy', pp. 27–28; on Notker's image of the aristocracy, Goetz, *Strukturen*, pp. 38–39.

³⁸ Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, I. 11, ed. by Haefele, p. 16; for the significance of rank order here, Goetz, *Strukturen*, pp. 91–93.

³⁹ Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, II. 21, ed. by Haefele, p. 92, and see Goetz, *Strukturen*, pp. 90–91.

⁴⁰ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by Gross and Schieffer, pp. 80–83; English trans. by D. Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism* (New York, 1970), pp. 208–27, reprinted in Dutton, *Carolingian Civilisation*, pp. 485–500.

possibility of office as butler or count of the stable offered the opportunity of progressing up the ladder.⁴¹ This reinforced a king-centred hierarchy as the measure of status among the aristocracy, and gave young nobles a political training which emphasized an ethic of royal service. Moreover, young aristocrats needed to adhere to appropriate codes of behaviour if they were to be rewarded with palace office: Hincmar emphasized that palace officials were to be 'of noble mind and body, stable, intelligent, discreet and sober'. It was through competition for courtly rank, then, that a model of conduct was disseminated. In *On the Governance of the Palace* Hincmar went into some detail as to the links between political training and the inculcation of virtue. Each young official 'closely followed their master, both honoured him and were honoured by him' and thus were expected to 'gain encouragement in his post by the observation of and conversation with this lord'. This guidance influenced their conduct, so that they 'always remained cheerful, quick to smile and intellectually alert'.⁴² The ethic of service which office at court imbued was voiced most clearly by Walahfrid Strabo, tutor to the infant Charles the Bald, in a poem predicting fame and fortune for one young aristocrat who had distinguished himself in the rebellion of 833–34. Ruadbern had loyally worked for the freedom and good name of the Empress Judith, according to Walahfrid risking life and limb in his work. For Walahfrid, Ruadbern's keeping the bonds of faith which bound him to the empress exemplified the moral bonds which informed proper political behaviour—the same ethic of wisdom and honesty voiced by Dhuoda, and in Hincmar's 'good life' and Ermanrich's 'norm of right living'. Walahfrid stressed Ruadbern's faith, *fides*, even in the face of adversity, and the wisdom and influence of his counsel. These were courtier's virtues, which augured a great career:

I am amazed that when you had not yet reached the age of maturity [. . .] you should have wished to achieve what God has determined that man shall attain only in a predetermined pattern. And so who in future shall be permitted to doubt your willingness to strive mightily on behalf of your master and in the cause of justice and loyalty if a better occasion and greater opportunity occur?⁴³

In *On the Governance of the Palace*, Hincmar gave detailed advice about how such models were to be learned. Bonds between different ranks within the court hierarchy, and the example of the great officers of the court, was central:

The kindness and concern of the senior officers provided [the young officials with] food or clothing or gold or silver, sometimes too horses or other gifts, both on particular

⁴¹ Cf. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 71.

⁴² Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by Gross and Schieffer, pp. 80–83.

⁴³ Walahfrid Strabo, 'To Ruadbern', ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Poet., 2 (Hannover, 1884), pp. 388–90; repr. and trans. by P. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 215–21 (p. 221).

occasions, as time, reason, and propriety allowed, and also at regular intervals, which was the more usual custom [. . .]. The chief officers rivalled one another by daily inviting now some officials, and then others, to their houses. There the chief officers sought to establish close relations with them, not by feeding their hungry stomachs but by sentiments of friendship and love, according to their ability. Because of the officers' zeal in this regard, rarely was there an official who remained one week without receiving from anyone an invitation.⁴⁴

Dining in the personal residences of the great officers of the court complemented ceremonial feasting in the royal presence on great feast days. That is, we have a hierarchy of spaces, and of meals, which reinforced the hierarchy of office. For Hincmar, this hierarchy was meant to be more than merely formal: he sketched a model of the court as a living social organism bound together by personal ties, which encouraged the diffusion of *mores* and models, thanks to the imitation of great officials by young aristocrats, and above all the example of the king. Notker put it differently, but more vividly:

the houses belonging to men of various ranks which were erected around the palace [at Aachen were arranged] in such a way that Charlemagne through the window of his chamber could see everything they were doing, and all their comings and goings, without them realising it.

Once again, here were hierarchies of function and of space with the king at their centre, regulating the conduct of the rest.⁴⁵

Conclusion: The Court as 'School of Human Service'

The activities of youthful aristocrats at court are clearly an important aspect of early medieval court culture, and one too easily ignored if we approach the notion of court culture solely in terms of intellectual history. After all, the effort to educate these youthful aristocrats was not only central in defining the tone of politics and society, it was also the point at which intellectual ideals were applied and translated into social norms. Life at court was defined by a set of *mores* and models of conduct. Court life was shared by scholars and young aristocrats. Ideals about self-control, the correction of sin, the pursuit of wisdom, and the need to demonstrate right order which were repeated time and again by Carolingian moralists pervaded the life of the court, where they were lived values.

⁴⁴ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. by Gross and Schieffer, pp. 80–83.

⁴⁵ Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, I. 30, ed. by Haefele, p. 41; and, for the use of space in court architecture, see Nelson, 'Was Charlemagne's Court a Courtly Society?', above, and Uwe Lobbedey, 'Carolingian Royal Palaces: The State of Research from an Architectural Historian's Viewpoint', below.

This picture of Carolingian courts deserves counterposing with Norbert Elias's increasingly influential work on early modern courts as centres for the dissemination of codes of behaviour and values.⁴⁶ Elias saw courtliness as a crucial factor in long-term changes in the texture of interpersonal behaviour, and attempted to trace the spread of an increased degree of self-control and restraint and thus, eventually, an increase in individual self-awareness. This scheme has recently been taken up, and the chronology of the teleology pushed back, by the American medievalist Stephen Jaeger: his 'civilizing process' began in the tenth century with Otto I and Bruno of Cologne, and proceeded through the diffusion of 'courtly' values from episcopal schools right across high medieval Europe.⁴⁷ The problem with either version is the characterization of diachronic change. In most traditional societies, if power is concentrated at a court then norms of behaviour that pervade life at court will pervade the political culture and spread outwards: this is a structure, not a process. Rather than attempting to detect a macro-historical movement, we need to investigate the choices made by those who influenced the culture of historical courts to promote particular models of behaviour.

The Carolingians promoted the centrality of their court to foster the personal bonds between kings and aristocrats which held their polity together. In doing so, they socialized a ruling class. Jaeger, in his most recent work, denies that the Carolingian court disseminated a set of values for the lay elite: normative accounts of education at court, he claims, were no different from standard programmes of monastic education, designed for clerics, not laymen.⁴⁸ Yet the search for educational programmes and normative texts is misplaced. The court was a living community, home to bands of youthful aristocrats; its values were disseminated through imitation and discipline, not through formal instruction. This was a 'technology of the self', rooted in the discipline of self-control, self-control which enabled the exercise of power. The Carolingians chose to construct their court society around an image of the courtier that drew on monastic ideals, but was distinct from them: here was a Christian morality for a secular but

⁴⁶ Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königstums und der höfischen Aristokratie*, Soziologische Texte, 54 (Berlin, 1969), translated as *The Court Society* by E. Jephcott (Oxford, 1983).

⁴⁷ C. S. Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), now developed in Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*. N. Elias, *The Civilising Process*, trans. by E. Jephcott, 2 vols (Oxford, 1978); there is much relevant discussion of Elias's ideas in Anger's *Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. by B. H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY, 1998). For the Carolingian period, it has been the work of Janet Nelson that has taught us to see a Carolingian 'court society': e.g. 'Charles le Chauve et les utilisations du savoir', in *L'école carolingienne d'Auxerre de Muretach à Remi*, ed. by D. Iognat-Prat (Paris, 1991), pp. 37–54; 'History Writing at the Courts of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald' in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1995), pp. 435–41.

⁴⁸ Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, pp. 21–35.

profoundly Christianized ruling class, a distinctively Carolingian aristocratic ethos.⁴⁹ One early-ninth-century commentator on the *Rule of St Benedict* saw as much, comparing the self-control and restraint that needed to be inculcated in the young monk in the ‘school of divine service’ that was the monastery with that learned by young laymen at the ‘school of human service’—the court.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Cf. the stimulating discussion of D. Ali, ‘Technologies of the Self: Courtly Artifice and Monastic Discipline in Early India’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 41 (1998), 159–83, for the parallel development and mutual influence of courtly and monastic codes of behaviour. That self-control constitutes an act of power is a theme running right through Michel Foucault’s thought: see e.g. ‘Technologies of the Self’, in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. by C. Marks (Amherst, 1996), pp. 16–45. On royal self-control and its political implications see now S. Airlie, ‘Private Bodies and the Body Politic in the Divorce Case of Lothar II’, *Past and Present*, 161 (1998), 3–38; M. Innes, “‘He Never Even Allowed His White Teeth to be Bared in Laughter’: The Politics of Humour in the Carolingian Renaissance”, in *Humour and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by G. Halsall (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 131–56.

⁵⁰ See De Jong, ‘Growing up in a Carolingian Monastery’, p. 114.

Mathematics at Charlemagne's Court and Its Transmission

PAUL L. BUTZER AND KARL W. BUTZER

Introduction

By AD 400 copies of the great scientific works of antiquity were becoming very scarce in the Mediterranean world. A renewed interest in learning then led to the writing of digests of earlier work, based either on partial copies or more often on intermediate digests of the third century. These efforts of the late antique period were highly influential for the first generation of Islamic translations during the ninth century and for the revived interest in scholarship in the Christian West a century earlier. Although modest in their accomplishments, such episodes of intellectual revitalization are of interest today because they suggest that older works were sequestered during troubled times, then disseminated and studied under more stable conditions, especially with institutional or personal patronage. Further, we must surmise that information and ideas also were transmitted verbally, allowing a few gifted and reflective individuals to work effectively even in out of the way places.

There also was a great deal of practical information, part of it written, that was applied to pragmatic questions of everyday importance, such as monumental architecture. A large part of this history of ideas and their practical applications is within the purview of historical investigation. Another part calls for specialists in the sciences, who ideally can grasp the complexity and significance of such understanding from their own disciplinary perspectives. These viewpoints may be very different, but they are complementary.¹

¹ P. L. Butzer, 'Mathematics in West and East from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries', in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times*, ed. by P. L. Butzer and D. Lohrmann (Basel, 1993), pp. 443–81.

If one would consider the greatest works of antiquity as the sole norm for work in the mathematical sciences, then of course advances in scientific knowledge during Carolingian times might be regarded as insignificant. However, the complete works of such earlier authors only became available in western Europe during the eleventh century when the earliest Latin translations from the Arabic were carried out, many based on Greek manuscripts which have not survived. Thus an analysis of scientific studies in early medieval times must begin with different premises, in view of the limited sources available. This paper focuses on the mathematics and astronomy treated or applied at the *scola palatina*, the court school of Charlemagne, at Aachen, or as otherwise sponsored by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious at affiliated centres.² The period of major concern is between 794 and c. 840 when Aachen became the nexus of scientific currents that emerged in western Christendom during the eighth century. A number of themes can be identified that are treated below: 1) The science of computing the date for the movable feast of Easter, the *Computus*, which received specific attention at Aachen by Alcuin,³ by a computistical conference of 809, in the *Aratea*, an astronomical poem, and by Dicuil; 2) the body of geometric transmission and understanding incorporated in the *Pseudo Boethian Geometry I*, probably assembled c. 780–810; 3) the collection of mathematical problems known as the *Propositiones ad acuendos iuvenes*, attributed to Alcuin, representing the oldest such collection in Latin and first mathematical ‘primer’ in western Europe; 4) the repertoire of practical geometry and surveying incorporated in the *Geometrica incerti auctoris*, probably compiled during the ninth century, perhaps by the anonymous Astronomer before 840; and 5) the geometry and the theory of proportions underlying construction of the royal chapel at Aachen, consecrated about 800.

The Computus

One of the most complex problems in mathematics and astronomy that engaged the Christian Church again and again was computation of the movable feast of Easter. Christians initially tied the celebration of Easter to the Jewish Passover, which was based on a lunar calendar. But time in the Roman Empire was reckoned by a solar calendar, so that early Christian scholars sought to coordinate the two calendars. No precise solution for this coordination has yet been found, and the available approximations, like those with the Islamic lunar calendar, require minor periodic adjustments. Further, liturgical planning in advance, to inform small or distant Christian communities, required ‘prediction’ of the date for Easter in future years.

² See the various papers on mathematics and astronomy in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, and in *Charlemagne and His Heritage: 1200 Years of Civilization and Science in Europe*, vol. II, *Mathematical Arts*, ed. by P. L. Butzer, H. Th. Jongen, and W. Oberschelp (Turnhout, 1998).

³ For Alcuin see the outstanding Cambridge dissertation of 1997 by Mary D. Garrison, ‘Alcuin’s World through His Letters and Verse’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1997), now forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

That date required conception and calculation of the relations between sun, moon, and earth in a nineteen-year cycle, say. This was a challenge that even intrigued C. F. Gauss, who as late as 1800 offered a formula to reckon the date of Easter. Presumably the problem was approached graphically at the time, by plotting the intersection of lunar and solar cycles, which would not only require an observational database but also a clear conception of cycles and related graphic skills.⁴

The recurrent problem posed by predicting the date for Easter led to a series of efforts, first in the Greek East, especially Egypt, and later in the Latin West.⁵ The *Laterculus*, based on Augustalis (c. 250) and a sixteen-year cycle of Hippolytus in Rome, was in use in the British Isles until about AD 700. The continuous sequence of calendar years going back to the birth of Christ, rather than with reference to the reigns of successive emperors or the first Easter, is primarily due to Dionysius Exiguus (d. 550).

It was Alcuin of York who, through his work, teachings, and efforts in the transmission and dissemination of the basic writings on *computus* and natural history of the Venerable Bede, made the Carolingian reform of the calendar possible; it standardized calendrical reckoning and chronology for the following centuries. Alcuin, the head of the palace school at Aachen, was most probably the author of the *Calculatio Albini magistri* of 776, definitely of the *Ratio de luna* of 798, but not of the anonymous texts *De bissexto* and *De saltu lunae*, as has often been assumed. On top, nine of the fifty-seven letters of the correspondence between Alcuin and Charlemagne written between November 797 and March 799 deal with astronomical and computistical problems.⁶

The most important of these dealt with the date of the so-called 'moon-leap', *saltus lunae*, needed to bring the sun and moon in the nineteen-year cycle in agreement. Alcuin wanted to follow the Roman tradition, but Charlemagne's young advisors, the *aegyptiaci pueri*, preferred the Alexandrian.⁷ Alcuin's own astronomical observations on the moon, Mars, and Sirius, in particular about the 'vanished Mars', hidden behind the sun about 18 July 798, inspired the Carolingian scholars to make further observations on the motions of the planets in the geocentric system.

⁴ For example, H. P. Lattin, 'The Eleventh-Century MS Munich 14436: Its Contribution to the History of Coordinates, of Logic, of German Studies in France', *Isis*, 38 (1947), 205–25.

⁵ P. L. Butzer, 'Mathematics in Egypt and Its Connections with the Court School of Charlemagne', in *Mathematical Analysis, Wavelets, and Signal Processing*, Contemporary Mathematics, 190 (Providence, RI, 1995), 1–30.

⁶ The minutes of this conference, probably due to Adalhard, still exist: *Epistolae Variorum Carlo Magno Regnante Scriptae*, no. 42, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 565–67.

⁷ For Alcuin and calendar reckoning during Charlemagne's reign see the outstanding doctoral thesis: K. Springsfeld (née Arendt), 'Alkuin Einfluss auf die Komputistik zur Zeit Karls' des Grossen' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule, Aachen, 2000), published as *Beiheft zu Sudhoff's Archiv*, Heft 48 (Stuttgart, 2002); also her master's thesis: K. Arendt, 'Komputistik zur Zeit Karls' des Grossen' (unpublished master's thesis, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule, Aachen, 1993), p. 107.

There was an astronomical-computistical conference of sorts in Aachen in 809, almost certainly organized by Abbot Adalhard of Corbie (c. 750–826), a first cousin of Charlemagne, regarded as an expert on the computus after Alcuin's death.⁸ The deliberations were elaborated as the Seven Book *Computus*, or the so-called 'Aachen Encyclopedia'. This work contains Alcuin's tracts *Calculatio* and *Ratio de luna*, and Bede's *De natura rerum*, together with a little of Martianus Capella. It even contains new astronomical diagrams visualizing Plinian planetary theory.⁹ This synthetic effort brought the understanding of the five planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) into a coherent picture of the celestial realm more precisely and comprehensively than any Latin text since the fifth century. According to Arno Borst, this encyclopaedic work is 'so extensive and compact as is no book on *computus* before or after; [...] it dominated European time-studies for the next 300 years'.¹⁰

Dicuil of Iona, who came to the court at Aachen c. 806/12, wrote a *Liber de astronomia* 813/14, primarily a *computus* for Easter tables, possibly in connection with the basic conference of 809.¹¹ It includes a critical explanation of the lunar cycle, calculates the date of Easter on the basis of Victor of Aquitaine (fl. 457), and is independent of Bede's methods. Mathematical analysis of this work is still lacking, precluding more direct comment. There also is the *Aratea*, an epic poem in hexameter form dealing with astronomical phenomena. The most renowned copy of the *Aratea*, MS Cod. Voss. Lat. Q 79 of Leiden University Library, the Aratos-Cicero-Germanicus-

⁸ D. Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, 1990); U. Winter, 'Die mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskataloge aus Corbie' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Humboldt Universität, Berlin, 1972); W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karlingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989); A. Borst, 'Computus: Zeit und Zahl im Mittelalter', *Deutsches Archiv*, 44 (1988), 1–82; A. Borst, *Die karolingische Kalenderreform*, Schriften der MGH, 46 (Hannover, 1998).

⁹ Dated to 809–12, perhaps written at Metz or Prüm; Madrid Biblioteca Nacional 3307 (of 820–40); Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Lat. 645 and Reg. lat. 309. The Three Book *Computus* of 812–20, possibly under Arno of Salzburg, which was supposed to amplify the Seven Book version, is found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 210, and Vienna, Österreichische National Bibliothek, Lat. 387. See W. Stevens, 'Astronomy in Carolingian Schools', in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. I, *Scholarship, Worldview and Understanding*, ed. by P. L. Butzer, M. Kerner, and W. Oberschelp (Turnhout, 1997), pp. 417–87.

¹⁰ A. Borst, 'Alkuin und die Enzyklopädie von 809', in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, pp. 53–78 (pp. 73 and 75): '[...] so ausgedehnt und geschlossen wie kein Lehrbuch der Zeitkunde davor und danach' and later '[. . .], dass die karolingische Enzyklopädie für die nächsten dreihundert Jahre das europäische Zeitdenken beherrschte'.

¹¹ W. Bergmann, 'Dicuils "De Mensura orbis terrae"', in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, pp. 525–37.

Hyginus transmission, was perhaps compiled by the 'Astronomer' at the court of Louis the Pious, possibly c. 816.¹²

The Pseudo-Boethian Geometry I

The *Pseudo-Boethian Geometry I*, in five books, includes excerpts of Boethius's *De arithmeticā* and important parts of Boethius's translation of at least the first four books of Euclid's *Elements*. As recently argued, the six earliest manuscripts contain all twenty-three definitions of Book I (for point, line, plane, angle, circle, rhomboid, etc.), including the five Postulates and the four Axioms, in complete form. Of the fifteen Definitions from Books II–III, fourteen are given, as well as seventy-six of the Enunciations of the 107 Propositions concerning triangles, diameters, tangents, and perpendiculars, accompanied by over a hundred constructions and illustrated with geometrical figures. But proofs are found only for Book I. Wesley Stevens has shown that it includes parts of Euclid's original arithmetic—including components that are not based on Nichomachos of Gerasa, the source of Boethius's *De arithmeticā*.¹³ It thus seems to include even excerpts from Books VII, VIII, and IX of the *Elements*.

This work also includes various gromatic tracts of the Roman *agrimensores* here rearranged to serve as geometrical material for the quadrivium.¹⁴ These are based on the *corpus gromaticorum*, a collection of wide-ranging surveying and centuriation results,

¹² For the *Aratea* see *Aratea: Kommentar zum Aratea des Germanicus*, MS Voss. Lat. Q 79 (Facsimile reproduction; Lucerne, 1989); A. von Euw, *Der Leidener Arateus: Antike Sternbilder in einer Karolingischen Handschrift* (Cologne, 1987); M. Erren, *Die Phainomena des Aratos von Soloi* (Wiesbaden, 1967). Concerning this date see R. Mostert and M. Mostert, 'Using Astronomy as an Aid to Dating Manuscripts: The Example of the Leiden Aratea', *Quaerendo*, 20.1 (1990), 248–61. They argue, 'From these (astronomical dates) we can deduce that the configuration, and probably the manuscript, can be dated 816, around 18 March.'

¹³ W. Stevens, 'The Earliest Ninth-Century Text of Euclidean Geometry; ms Paris BN Lat. 13955' (in preparation); Stevens, 'Euclidean Geometry in the Early Middle Ages; a Preliminary Reassessment', in *Villard's Legacy: Studies in Medieval Technology, Science and Art*, ed. by M.-T. Zenner (Aldershot, in press); Stevens, 'Karolingische renovatio im Wissenschaften und Literatur', in *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III in Paderborn*, ed. by Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz, 1999), III, 663–80.

¹⁴ G. Chouquer and F. Favory, *Les arpenteurs romains: théorie et pratique* (Paris, 1992); L. Toneatto, *Codices artis mensoriae: i manoscritti degli antichi opuscoli latini d'agrimensura (V–XIX sec.)* (Spoleto, 1994); *Die römische Feldmesskunst; interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu ihrer Bedeutung für die Zivilisationsgeschichte Roms*, ed. by O. Behrends and L. Capogrossi Colognesi (Göttingen, 1992).

the archetype of which has been dated to about AD 450, with the earliest extant copies from the sixth or seventh century (in Wolfenbüttel).¹⁵

Dating of the *Pseudo-Boethian Geometry* is fluid. Ullman has argued that it was assembled at Corbie under Abbot Adalhard; the three oldest extant copies are dated by Stevens to about AD 825–40.¹⁶ Indeed, Stevens tentatively ascribes the oldest of these copies to scribes at Fulda, perhaps to Walahfrid Strabo (who spent 827–29 there) and his friend Gottschalk (c. 803–69), who also worked at Corbie.

The Propositiones

In a letter of 800 to Charlemagne, Alcuin mentions sending him ‘certain subtle figures of arithmetic, for pleasure’. These and others like them are assumed to be the source of the *Propositiones ad acuendos iuvenes*.¹⁷ It is an eclectic collection of problems designed to sharpen logical and mathematical acuity. In part their interest stems from their diverse sources: a good number of them are familiar stock, originally derived from Greek or even Egyptian sources. Others are unusual variants of the same, but the nine types of *Hundred Fowls Problems* are first known from China c. AD 475, and a *Hound*

¹⁵ Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek Aug. 2⁰. 36.23 (fols 2–83, 84–122, and 124–56). G. Thulin, *Die Handschriften des Corpus Agrimensorum Romanum* (Berlin, 1911).

¹⁶ B. L. Ullman, ‘Geometry in the Medieval Quadrivium’, in *Studi di bibliografia e di storia in onore di Tammaro de Marinis*, 4 vols (Vatican City, 1964), IV, 263–85; M. Folkerts, ‘The Importance of the Pseudo-Boethian Geometria during the Middle Ages’, in *Boethius and the Liberal Arts: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by M. Masi (Bern, 1981), pp. 187–209. Stevens, ‘Karolingische renovatio’.

¹⁷ Alcuin, *Epistolae*, 101, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Epp., 4, pp 18–481. M. Folkerts has found thirteen manuscripts of the text, the earliest (Vatican Reg. lat. 309 from St Denis—not complete) being from the ninth century. The next oldest manuscript is from the late tenth century (Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Augiensis 205) and is essentially the Alcuin text. M. Folkerts, *Die älteste mathematische Aufgabensammlung in lateinischer Sprache: Die Alkuin zugeschriebenen ‘Propositiones ad acuendos iuvenes’: Überlieferung, Inhalt, kritische Edition*, vol. VI, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mathematische-naturwissenschaftliche Klasse, Denkschriften, 116 (Vienna, 1978); M. Folkerts, ‘Die Alkuin zugeschriebenen *Propositiones ad acuendos iuvenes*’, in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, pp. 273–82. For translations into German and English see M. Folkerts and H. Gericke, ‘Die Alkuin zugeschriebenen *Propositionen ad acuendos iuvenis*: Lateinischer Text und deutsche Übersetzung’, in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, pp. 283–362; D. Singmaster and J. Hadley, ‘Problems to Sharpen the Young: An Annotated Translation of *Propositiones ad acuendos iuvenes*, the Oldest Mathematical Problem Collection in Latin, Attributed to Alcuin of York’, *The Mathematics Gazette*, 76 (1992), 102–26; D. Singmaster, ‘The History of Some of Alcuin’s *Propositiones*’, in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. II, ed. by Butzer, Jongen, and Oberschelp, pp. 11–30.

and Hare Problem (an overtaking problem) is first recorded from China c. AD 150. A number—six of the fifty-three—also are completely new.¹⁸ The genre is illustrated by one form of the *River Crossing Problem*:

A man had to take a wolf, a goat and a bunch of cabbages across a river. The only boat he could find could only take two of them at a time. But he had been ordered to transfer all of these to the other side in good condition. How could this be done?

Solution: I would take the goat and leave the wolf and the cabbage. Then I would return and take the wolf across. Having put the wolf on the other side I would take the goat back over. Having left that behind, I would take the cabbage across. I would then row across again, and having picked up the goat take it over once more. By this procedure there would be some healthy rowing, but no lacerating catastrophe.¹⁹

Another example is the *Crossing the Desert Problem*, the *Jeep Problem*, or the *Explorer's Problem*:

A certain gentleman ordered that 90 measures of grain were to be moved from one of his houses to another, 30 leagues (= *leuwas*) away. One camel was to carry the grain in three journeys, carrying 30 measures on each journey. The camel eats one measure for each league. How many measures will remain?

Solution: On the first journey the camel carries 30 measures over 20 leagues and eats one measure for each league, that is he eats 20 measures leaving 10. On the second journey he likewise carries 30 measures and eats 20 of these leaving 10. On the third journey he does likewise: he carries 30 measures, and eats 20 of these, leaving 10. Now there remain 30 measures and 10 leagues to go. He carries these 30 on his fourth [Problem requires 3] journey to the house, and eats 10 on the way, so there remains just 20 measures of the whole sum.²⁰

It should be noted that there is also a still better solution, involving six journeys.

¹⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the different problem types see P. L. Butzer, 'Mathematics and Astronomy at the Court School of Charlemagne and Its Mediterranean Roots', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales (XIIIe–XVes)*, 5 (1998), 203–44.

¹⁹ Folkerts, *Die älteste mathematische Aufgabensammlung*, no. 18. This problem is analysed in the setting of integer programming in every direction in R. Borndörfer, M. Grötschel, and A. Löbel, 'Alcuin's Transportation Problems and Integer Programming', in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. II, ed. by Butzer, Jongen, and Oberschelp, pp. 379–409.

²⁰ Folkerts, *Die älteste mathematische Aufgabensammlung*, no. 52. This optimization problem, the first appearance of the modern jeep problem in operations research, is treated in detail by W. Oberschelp, 'Alcuin's Camel and Jeep Problem', in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. II, ed. by Butzer, Jongen, and Oberschelp, pp. 411–22.

The last two problems played prominent roles in the centuries to follow; they shaped the subdisciplines of discrete mathematics (combinatorics and graph theory), optimization (linear and integer programming), and operations research, all fields of Applied Mathematics that have become especially popular only in the past fifty years. They encapsulate all the characteristics of most of today's large-scale real transportation problems. Other, more familiar problems deal with geometric and arithmetic progressions and with the areas of rectangles, quadrilaterals, and circles.

Several of Alcuin's problems have their models in a Byzantine collection of epigrams, the *Anthologia Palatina*. Its Book XIX contains forty-four arithmetical problems, ascribed to Metrodoros. These include the geometric 'Heap' problems (namely Alcuin's problems 2–4, 36, 40, 45, and 48), problem 7, the 'Cistern Problem' 8, as well as problems 16 and 44. Metrodoros was a brother of Anthemios of Tralles (d. 534), the master builder of the Hagia Sophia. Perhaps the epigrams became known to the court school via Ellisaios, the Greek teacher sent by the Byzantine emperor to tutor Rotrud, Charlemagne's oldest daughter, c. 781–806. There may possibly be an association between these epigrams and the earliest architectural plans of the Minster, since Metrodoros's brother was the builder of the Hagia Sophia and perhaps also of the Sergios and Bacchus Church, the 'little' Hagia Sophia. The latter has interesting similarities with San Vitale of Ravenna.²¹ There may also be links between some of Alcuin's problems and the four included in *De arithmeticis propositionibus*, ascribed to Bede and largely transmitted in the same manuscripts as the *Propositiones*.

The Geometria incerti auctoris

Only Books III and IV of the *Geometria incerti auctoris* survive.²² One book deals with the practical solution of surveying problems while the other uses sixty-one problems to deal with mensuration of triangles, circles, trapezoids, and other figures. Problems 30–39 are identical with ten in the *Propositiones* where they are presented in the same order; where there are differences, the treatment in the *Geometria* is much improved and the solution more precise, suggesting a slightly later compilation. The author was versed in the fundamentals of geometry and calculating with fractions; he probably drew from an *agrimensores* text not known to us. Although not yet re-edited according to modern standards, this practical geometry was once attributed to Gerbert of Aurillac (c. 945–1003), however Folkerts and Gericke suggest that it was probably written in the ninth century, perhaps at Aachen (and possibly c. 840).²³

²¹ See below.

²² G. Beaujouan, 'Part raison de nombres', *L'art du calcul et les savoirs scientifiques médiévaux* (Aldershot, 1991); N. Bubnov, *Gerberti opera mathematica* (Berlin, 1899; repr. 1963).

²³ Folkerts, *Die älteste mathematische Aufgabensammlung*, p. 30; Folkerts and Gericke 'Die Alkuin zugeschriebenen *Propositionen ad acuendos iuvenis*'; H. Gericke, *Mathematik im Abendland: Von den römischen Feldmessern bis zu Descartes* (Berlin, 1990).

The Geometry of the Aachen Minster

The facade and spires of the Cathedral of Cologne were completed 1863–80, following detailed drawings of c. 1300. Even in the 1880s its 157-metre-high towers were the tallest in the world, and they withstood the shocks of repeated heavy bombing of the adjacent railway station during the 1940s. This shows how medieval buildings were not only conceptualized as a whole and in detail, but that the immense load-bearing issues central to the stability of such a large slender building were well understood. No such plans exist for the octagonal court chapel of Aachen, built c. 792–800, an innovative structure which is attributed to Odo of Metz. At 32 m elevation, the domed vault represented, in its turn, the tallest building north of the Alps until the twelfth century. Most authors believe that this core element of the Aachen Minster was inspired by the Byzantine masterpiece, San Vitale, in Ravenna (522–47). Nonetheless the warped and domed forms of San Vitale, predicated on brick and light terracotta vault construction, are replaced in Aachen by more typically Roman barrel and groin vaults.²⁴

Architectural styles and aesthetics are based on an explicit geometric conception, in turn implemented by particular construction materials and methods, applied with an empirical group of mechanical laws that relate to centre of gravity, mass, and load-bearing capacity. Even to lay out the base of a large, octagonal structure, such as that at the core of the Minster, required an elaborate exercise in practical geometry, initially on the designer's board and then on the ground. First, an exact square of the desired dimension had to be laid out, perhaps by initially tracing out a circle by means of a piece of string, followed by measuring the half-length of intersecting diagonals. Then, in both directions from each corner, that length had to be marked off on the square. The eight resulting points would mark the corners of the octagon. From that starting point, the architect had to carry out countless analogous operations to lay out the sixteen-sided perimeter walls, and to determine each detail of the network of supporting pillars and vaults, all according to a fairly explicit notion of proportionality, and in anticipation of the load distribution of the superstructure. Subsequently, each stage of the vertical construction would require similar planning, but in three dimensions.

The architect, therefore, had to be a good geometer and an experienced engineer, quite apart from his sense of aesthetics. Such qualifications may have become fairly commonplace during the twelfth century, but during early medieval times they were not. North of the Alps, domestic architecture was mainly in wood, while a rectangular stone church with attached, semicircular apses would pose few technical problems. Indeed, the drums and towers of the church of St Riquier (built in the 790s) were of wood, and basilican churches were generally covered with wooden roofs.²⁵

The static problems of heavy stone construction are of an order of magnitude greater than for wood, and no stone-vaulted dome of any size had been built anywhere since the

²⁴ K. J. Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture 800 to 1200* (New York, 1978), p. 51.

²⁵ Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture*, pp. 44–45 and 468, nn. 3, 5.

sixth century. The high, vaulted octagon of the Minster was then a daring structure for the period, and its architect will have required direct experience in the design and execution of complex stone structures. Elaborate masonry churches were being built in Lombardy or Southern Italy at the time, but of very different design, so that the architect commissioned to design the Minster would have first had to study San Vitale very closely.²⁶ But despite very similar dimensions, the different building materials available in Aachen required different constructional forms to carry the heavier loads, presumably contributing to certain adjustments of proportionality.

The Minster conformed to a system of proportions, in that the narthex diameter is identical to the elevation of the domical vault, and twice that of the octagon. For Michael Jansen, the octagon serves as a module not only to express a proportional harmony in the vertical dimensions but also in the horizontal.²⁷ As a design, the floor-plan of the octagon can be folded out from each of the eight sides to form a perfect arabesque that aligns surprisingly well with the intricate details of the vaulting in the narthex. That would imply a deliberate, symbolic subtext to the geometric figures. Jansen interprets this elaboration of an octagonal figure by a 'folding out' and reproducing indefinitely as a metaphor of evangelization in all directions.

Axel Hausmann, on the other hand, focuses on the proportional relations of various length dimensions that contribute to the structure of the Minster at various scales.²⁸ He argues that such dimensions increase in a progression determined by the module $\sigma = 1 + \sqrt{2}$, corresponding to the 'ideal' numbers 1, 2, 5, 12, 29, 70, 169, where each number is equal to twice its previous number plus its preprevious number (e.g.

²⁶ For basic information on San Vitale, see F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes* (Wiesbaden, 1976). Concerning the architecture of the Aachen Minster see the recent substantial paper by Cord Meckseper, 'Wurde in der mittelalterlichen Architektur zitiert? Das Beispiel der Pfalz Karls des Grossen in Aachen', in *Jahrbuch 1998, Braunschweiger Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* (Braunschweig, 1999), pp. 65–85, and Uwe Lobbedey, 'Carolingian Royal Palaces: The State of Research from an Architectural Historian's Viewpoint', below in this volume. See also C. Meckseper, 'Über die Fünfeckkonstruktion bei Villard de Honnecourt und im späten Mittelalter', *Journal of the History of Architecture* (1985), 31–40, where he treats in a documentary fashion the geometrical knowledge of medieval master masons, emphasizing the later medieval period.

²⁷ M. Jansen, 'Concinnitas and venustas – weitere Überlegungen zu Mass und Proportion der Pfalzkapelle Karls des Grossen', in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. I, ed. by Butzer, Kerner, and Oberschelp, pp. 367–96.

²⁸ A. Hausmann, *Kreis, Quadrat und Oktogon: Struktur und Symbolik der Aachener Kaiserpfalz* (Aachen, 1994); idem, '... Inque pares numeros omnia convenient ... Der Bauplan der Aachener Palastkapelle', in *Charlemagne and His Heritage*, vol. II, ed. by Butzer, Jongen, and Oberschelp, pp. 321–66; idem, *Cherubim und Kreuze, Karolingische Bronzen im Aachener Dom* (Aachen, 2000). In the latter volume the author argues that the bronze railing circling the top floor reveals the mathematical system used in the minster's construction.

$12 = 2 \times 5 + 2$). The utility of this ‘ideal cut’ can be illustrated with a sheet of modern, European A4 paper, for which the proportion of the long to the short side is $\sqrt{2} \div 1$ or 0.4142, the ‘ideal cut’. The paper can be folded in half along its longer axis as often as desired, the proportion remaining the same. In other words, the proportions can be maintained while expanding or contracting the dimensions, by doubling or halving respectively. That would allow for relatively simple geometric adjustments during the course of construction. This reproducibility has analogues with Jansen’s octagonal module, and Hausmann also infers iconographic content for his method, much like that attached to the better known and older ‘golden cut’.²⁹

Whether or not one is prepared to accept these stimulating analyses and their inferred didactic implications, it is apparent that geometrical figures and reasoning represent a critical component in the construction of a complex monument such as the Minster. Further, given the time and context, geometry will have served as both a practical tool and a theological device. Progressions of numbers, angles, and geometric figures had come to signify scriptural events or Christian cosmology,³⁰ just as they also served to whet the mind or solve problems in the here and now. The same intimate interdigitation of science and religion is apparent in the related field of cartography, where the function of maps ‘was primarily didactic and moralizing and lay not in the communication of geographical facts’.³¹

To embed such often subtle perspectives into an architectural design supposes repeated discussions within an elite scholarly group, from the initial, groundbreaking plans to subsequent conversations. Indeed different persons may well have had a primary say on the functional, the aesthetic, and the eschatological aspects of the design. Given the spirit of his biography, Charlemagne will have participated in such inferred discussions, and presumably he made the final decisions. It is tempting to think of Odo of Metz as the supervisor of construction, but he may just as well have been the primary inspiration for the religious metaphors incorporated into the design, a role that may have been seen by his contemporaries as more significant than the geometrical and engineering skills of the architect who made the palatine chapel a reality.

Who that architect was will remain a mystery. He would have had to be expert in the living tradition of practical geometry represented by the *agrimensores*. He understood the principles of harmonic proportions still current in the Mediterranean world.

²⁹ For example, H. E. Huntley, *The Divine Proportion: A Study in Mathematical Beauty* (New York, 1970); A. Hausmann, *Der Goldene Schnitt, Göttliche Proportionen und Noble Zahlen* (Norderstedt, 2001).

³⁰ Hausmann, *Der Goldene Schnitt*; Jansen, ‘Concinnitas and venustas -weitere Überlegungen’; also, with reservation, N. Hiscock, ‘The Aachen Chapel: A Model of Salvation?’, in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization*, ed. by Butzer and Lohrmann, pp. 115–26.

³¹ D. Woodward, ‘Medieval *mappae mundi*’, in *The History of Cartography*, vol. I, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J. B. Harley and D. Woodward (Chicago, 1987), pp. 286–370 (p. 342).

Given the stability of the octagon across 1200 years, he must have been a skilled engineer in regard to the distribution of massive masonry loading. That suggests an Italian origin, perhaps someone from the abbey of Montecassino, the monastic home of Paul the Deacon (c. 720–99). But no free-standing, round or octagonal structure had been built in the West for some 250 years, so that the choice of design is unlikely to have been his own. Charlemagne very probably visited and came to admire Ravenna during his Lombard campaigns or Italian visits, and it is more than likely that it was he who decided to recreate the splendour of Ravenna as the radial centre of a new, spiritual Jerusalem.

Transmission, Scholarship, and Patronage

The construction of the Minster suggests parallels to other forms of royal sponsorship that drew specialists from abroad to Aachen, where they practised their expertise while at the same time educating local persons of promise, in order to spawn a new generation of indigenous scholars and craftsmen. In this sense the Carolingian renewal was both organizational, bringing talented people together, and educational, sponsoring new talent.

As the classical Graeco-Roman and Islamic traditions of scholarship reveal, learning is a cumulative process that requires not only talent but a critical mass of like-minded scholars, active communication, and sustained interest by patrons or an elite audience.³² In the scientific realm, fresh observations or experimentation lead to innovation and eventually synthesis, across timescales measured in generations and even centuries. Given politico-economic instability, or an intellectual environment uninterested in learning, or hostile to innovation or heterodoxy, such scholarly trajectories can be interrupted or snuffed out. Lacking the printing press, the paucity of manuscripts made a revival of learning very difficult, for a ‘revival’ required access to and digestion of earlier writing, understanding, and competing ideas. The recompilation and commentaries typical of revival efforts consequently deserve admiration rather than condescension.

With only erratic support from political figures, scholarly activity during the late period was primarily sustained by a few enlightened churchmen, who enjoyed the relative luxury and security to devote part of their time to intellectual pursuits. The survival of many of the works of antiquity, particularly those in Latin, owes much to their efforts. What is less fully appreciated is that the universalist goals of the Church led to an unprecedented network of communication, along the length of the Mediterranean and even to the British Isles. This networking is exemplified by periodic communications in regard to the liturgical date of Easter, by the early ecumenical councils and the later provincial synods, as well as by influential figures such as Cassiodorus, John of Biclar,

³² K. W. Butzer, ‘The Islamic Traditions of Agro-Ecology: Cross-Cultural Experience, Ideas, and Innovation’, *Ecumene*, 1 (1994), 7–50.

Gregory the Great, and Maximus the Confessor, who worked and lived in both the East and West.³³

Indeed the transnational experience of the churchmen of the late empire and early Byzantine period will have rivalled that of any prestigious occupation group until modern times. The interchange and presumed networking of these early Christians of learning will have, to some degree, compensated for their limited numbers or access to library sources. Both old and new manuscripts will probably have been exchanged—for example, the early dissemination of Isidorean manuscripts in the West—and potential scholars isolated by distance may have been sustained in the knowledge that they were not alone in their efforts. Above all, the introduction of monasticism in the West was commonly linked with intellectual aspirations, so that the best institutions of their kind became academic nuclei of sorts.

But all this should not detract from the fact that even in Charlemagne's day academic standards at some monastic schools were abysmal. In no era was there a substitute for individual excellence, such as exemplified by Bede and Alcuin. Charlemagne must have recognized this, judging by his efforts to bring top-flight scholars to the court school in Aachen, where they interacted with such positive results. As a by-product of the close relationship with Rome, new manuscripts continued to flow to the Frankish monasteries. The all-too-brief Carolingian *restauratio* was very much a consequence of the sustained patronage and inspired guidance of Charlemagne himself. Not since the interaction of Pliny with Vespasian and Titus had there been such enlightened sponsorship of learning.

³³ The problem of transmission of Greek and Latin learning and its Mediterranean roots has been treated in detail in Butzer 'Mathematics in Egypt', and Butzer 'Mathematics and Astronomy'. The former paper considers especially the transmission via England and Ireland, the latter via Visigothic and Suevic Spain, and Byzantium.

The Illustrated Manuscript of the *Visio Baronti* [*Revelatio Baronti*] in St Petersburg (Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5)

LAWRENCE NEES

Art historians have tended to associate the artistic culture of early medieval courts, whether in western or eastern Christendom or in the Islamic world, with luxurious materials and craftsmanship. As with so many generalizations, this one contains much truth, but can be overdrawn. Certainly carved ivories, silken fabrics, and manuscripts written in gold on dyed parchment are important markers of courtly production, and such works may normally (but not inevitably) be imagined to have direct or indirect courtly patronage or courtly recipients, but there are many exceptions.¹

¹ The travel and research for this study were supported in part through a General University Research Grant from the University of Delaware. The text here printed was submitted for publication in 1999 and revised in May 2000. It is not possible to take into account more recent research, but I must mention the outstanding lecture and article by John Contreni, ‘Building Mansions in Heaven: The Viso Baronti, Archangel Raphael, and a Carolingian King’, to appear in *Speculum*, 78 (2003), which the author kindly allowed me to see in advance of publication. I have also benefited from the comments of Michelle Lucey-Roper.

The magnificence of the Codex Amiatinus, not just its scale and majesty of production but also its use, is one possible example of a work of great luxury not from or for a court. Its page of purple parchment and gold script might well have caused scholars to imagine courtly production and/or destination. However, in this unusual case we are so well informed about the manuscript’s origin that we can say with virtual certainty that neither was involved, unless of course one takes (as seems to me reasonable) the papal court as ‘courtly’ (see John Osborne, ‘Papal Court Culture during the Pontificate of Zacharias (AD 741–52)’, below; see Lawrence Nees, ‘Problems of Form and Function in Early Medieval Illustrated Bibles from Northwest

Such luxury works by no means exhaust the category of court art, however, although they have for obvious reasons tended to attract the greatest attention from scholars. An expanded conception of early medieval court art should recognize that in this period court culture, commonly associated with secular courts, whether imperial, royal, or even occasionally ducal,² surely must be extended to include ecclesiastical courts, not only papal but episcopal and even arguably monastic. Moreover, art historians have perhaps been slow to recognize that court culture not only linked rulers and subjects, but also linked courtiers to one another in ties of service and friendship. The exchange of poems and letters among members of a court is well attested in the Carolingian period, what might be thought a lateral rather than a vertical integration, and is associated with the geographic dispersion of the 'court' itself. It is clear that a just assessment of court culture must take into account the frequent absences of courtiers from the presence of the ruler and their court associates; products of court culture reflect absence as well as presence, desire and longing as much as proximate fulfilment.³

One example of the attenuated links that could constitute early medieval court culture, which offers evidence bearing upon art and possibly serves as a paradigm of sorts for the problem to be addressed in this essay, is the correspondence between Einhard and Lupus of Ferrières. Einhard is our leading source for life at Charlemagne's court, where he was present for many years before retiring to his abbey at Seligenstadt. Lupus of Ferrières was educated in a monastery and only came to court for the first time in 836, already a mature man, but his education at Ferrières was in the hands of a student of Alcuin's, another member of Charlemagne's court, and from 830 he studied at Fulda with Hrabanus Maurus, another of Alcuin's students. From 830 Lupus began a correspondence with Einhard, whom he had never met but with whom he had many mutual acquaintances and interests, and whom he congratulates on the *Life of Charlemagne (Vita Karoli)*, which he had just 'come into his hands'. Their correspondence mixes intellectual and personal issues, including Lupus's letter of consolation on the death of Einhard's wife Emma in 836, and Einhard's moving response. In the last of the letters, Lupus requests that Einhard send him 'through his painter, when he returns, but in a codex carefully protected by a seal', a copy of the royal scribe Bertcaud's 'scheme of ancient letters'.⁴ We do not know whether the request was ever honoured, but this

Europe', in *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, ed. by John Williams (University Park, 1999), pp. 121–77 (esp. pp. 148–74.)

² On the Lombard ducal court at Benevento see John Mitchell, 'Arichis und die Künste', in *Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn: Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, ed. by Hans-Rudolf Meier, Carol Jäggi, and Philippe Büttner (Berlin, 1995), pp. 47–64.

³ For examples see Donald Bullough, 'Aula Renovata: The Carolingian Court before the Aachen Palace', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 71 (1985), 267–301, and Dieter Schaller, 'Vortrags- und Zirkulardichtung am Hof Karls des Grossen', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 6 (1970), 14–36.

⁴ *Charlemagne's Courtier: The Complete Einhard*, ed. and trans. by Paul Edward Dutton (Peterborough, Ont., 1998), letters to and from Lupus of Ferrières, pp. 166–84.

correspondence gives us a rare glimpse into the kind of personal ties that may lie behind some isolated and problematic works of art which reveal the impact of court culture even without bearing obvious markers of courtliness.

Dante's *Commedia* is not only a great literary work and far the most famous of medieval vision-texts, but a text that has appealed to a wide variety of artists.⁵ Based upon the idea of a living person travelling through the Otherworld, Dante's poem follows a literary genre within the Christian tradition stretching back to the early Middle Ages, and of course beyond that to Dante's chosen guide Vergil.⁶ The Otherworld vision is a significant literary genre, reflecting what Aron Gurevich has termed the sense that 'the radical boundary dividing life and death had to be at least partially transparent'.⁷ Given that the genre is both termed and involves vision and that scholars such as Gurevich speak of it with visual metaphors, it is surprising that art historians have given so little attention to one (and one only) mid-ninth-century manuscript of one (and one only) of the most intriguing early medieval Otherworld vision texts, the seventh-century *Visio Baronti*, which contains five interesting figural illustrations.⁸

The manuscript, St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5, is a very small book containing the *Visio Baronti* (entitled *Revelatio Baronti* in the manuscript, the title *Visio Baronti* appearing in other witnesses and adopted by all modern scholarship) and one other vision text, the unique surviving witness to the *Visio Rothcharii*.⁹ Although the inference is not beyond question, it seems likely to have been produced as a private work rather than a library copy, being extremely small in size (roughly 16 x 11 cm) and containing only twenty-two folios of text and illustrations. Were it of later medieval date, one would be tempted to call it a devotional manuscript. Although the tight binding makes codicological examination difficult, the manuscript appears to

⁵ For a recent overview see Charles H. Taylor and Patricia Finley, *Images of the Journey in Dante's Divine Comedy* (New Haven, 1997).

⁶ On Vergil's description of the Underworld see for a convenient overview, with earlier bibliography, R. D. Williams, 'The Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*', *Greece and Rome*, n.s., 11 (1964), 48–63, reprinted in *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid*, ed. by S. J. Harrison (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–207. Of course Vergil is by no means the first or only ancient writer to treat this theme, and himself follows the lead given by Homer in *The Odyssey* and by Plato, but it is fair to single out Vergil here as the only textual and pictorial precedent likely known to the makers of the St Petersburg codex here discussed.

⁷ Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. by János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1988), p. 109.

⁸ The sole exception is Janie Ruth Curry, 'The Illustrated *Visio Baronti*: A Carolingian Manuscript from Reims', *Athanor*, 11 (1992), 6–8, to which I am much indebted for initially calling my attention to the manuscript.

⁹ Antonio Staerk, *Les manuscrits latins du Ve au XIII^e siècle conservés à la Bibliothèque impériale de Saint-Petersbourg* (Saint Petersburg, 1910; repr. Hildesheim and New York, 1976), no. XXIV, vol. I: pp. 43–44 and vol. II: pls XLII–XLIII.

be made up of three regular gatherings, apparently arranged in the sequence *quaternio, ternio, quaternio*. I see no reason to imagine that it is a fragment of a once larger codex containing a compendium of dream and vision texts, or hagiographic material, as is the case with many of the other surviving witnesses discussed in Wilhelm Levison's 1910 edition, upon which I entirely rely for its discussion of the manuscript transmission.¹⁰ Among the twenty-seven known manuscripts of the *Visio Baronti*,¹¹ only St Petersburg has any figural illustrations, although several others contain an image of St Peter's key, an image explicitly called for by the words of the text.¹² At a climactic moment, when the demons refuse to release Barontus from their clutches as ordered by Peter, the text reads: 'Blessed Peter—having three keys in his hand, of which you have a drawing here (*similitudinem hanc*)—sought to strike them on the head.'¹³

The St Petersburg manuscript opens with an imposing pair of pages (fig. 1), a full frontispiece miniature on fol. 1 verso, facing on fol. 2 recto the dedication and title at the top in uncial letters, IN NOMINE D[OMINI]NI INCIPIT REVELATIO BEATI BARONTI MONACHI, followed by a very large ME ligature for *Memorare*, the initial word of the text.¹⁴ The text continues in three lines of uncials, of which the middle line is executed in blue ink, and on the verso changes to minuscule. Although the ornament of the initial, in pale yellow and blue, is crudely executed, it is remarkably various, including animal, vegetal, and interlace motifs, with beast heads uncomfortably vomiting forth from the angled strokes of the M. It is as if the initialist is not much accustomed to such work and his ambition exceeds his powers. This impression is, I believe, important; indeed the entire opening is remarkably imposing for a text of this sort, more the kind of thing one would expect with a Gospel book or Psalter, even a monumental

¹⁰ 'Visio Baronti monachi Longoretensis', ed. by Wilhelm Levison, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH, SRM, 5 (Hannover, 1910), pp. 368–94, pl. I. The text was earlier printed, from the manuscript in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, cod. 3595 (olim 8216–18), as *Visio S. Baronti*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by J. Bollandus, Mars (Paris and Rome, 1865), III, 568–72. Michelle Lucey-Roper recently completed a doctoral dissertation on the *Visio Baronti* text, under the direction of Professor Henry Mayr-Harting, at Oxford University.

¹¹ This is the number given by Yitzhak Hen, 'The Structure and Aims of the *Visio Baronti*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 47 (1996), 477–97. Michelle Lucey-Roper, in an oral communication for which I am most grateful, confirmed the existence of at least twenty-six manuscripts.

¹² 'Visio Baronti', ed. by Levison, p. 387, with drawings from four manuscripts.

¹³ The translation here, as throughout, is from J. N. Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism, 350–750: The Conversion of Western Europe*, rev. edn (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 200.

¹⁴ 'Visio Baronti', ed. by Levison, p. 377, correctly gives this title, but adopts *Visio Baronti* for the edition of the text, based upon the preponderant readings in other manuscripts.



Fig. 1. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct. v.1.5, fol. 1^v–2^r, *Visio Baronti*, opening miniature and initial. By kind permission of the Russian National Library.

inscription.¹⁵ Also it is important to note that the amateurish quality of the initial ligature is not matched by the miniatures, which are proficient if not aesthetically inspired, and probably the work of a different person, a specialist painter.¹⁶

The opening miniature (fig. 2) is difficult to read, and is truly a frontispiece not for the opening words but for the opening section of the text, the first eight chapters together. It is much the most complex miniature of the book, again ambitiously conceived, crowned with an egg-and-dart frieze framing the top of the image. At the lower left corner are two figures apparently speaking to each other, perhaps the monk Barontus, in a fever and unable to speak, pointing to his throat, about to fall down as if dead before the witnessing brother Eudo.¹⁷ Below the two figures, in the centre of the page, is a central arch flanked by columns carrying a small gable or dome, perhaps representing the monastery of Longoretus or Lonrey, near Bourges, where the text originated in AD 679, for the text explicitly refers to the customary singing of Matins in the church. According to the text, after the brother monks saw that Barontus's spirit had departed from his body, they began to sing the Psalms through the night, praying that God would bring Barontus's soul to 'the heavenly region'. They continued until cockcrow, when Barontus awoke singing 'Glory to God', and told of his experiences.¹⁸

Above the large arch, at the centre of the miniature, is a large vertical structure of three or four storeys, in front of which is shown the Archangel Raphael carrying the half-length figure of Barontus, representing his soul ascending to 'the heavenly region'. To the right in this middle register are flames, which continue down to the lower right margin, flames from which demons seem to be emerging to attack Barontus's soul. In chapter three of the text, Barontus says that after he fell into his trance he was attacked by two demons, who sought to carry him to hell, until Raphael arrived and determined

¹⁵ This pattern of altering size and colour of script is common in Carolingian manuscripts and also occurs in contemporary monumental inscriptions from a monastic context; for a recently discovered near contemporary example of the latter, with alternating lines of script of different colours see Richard Hodges, John Mitchell, and Lucy Watson, 'The Discovery of Abbot Talaricus' (817–3 October 823) Tomb at San Vincenzo al Volturno', *Antiquity*, 71 (1997), 453–56.

¹⁶ This is not the context for a discussion of the issue of professional itinerant painters in Carolingian manuscript illumination, for which see my discussion in a review of Wilhelm Koehler and Florentine Mütherich, *Die Schule von Reims*, Part 1: *Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 9. Jahrhunderts*, Die karolingischen Miniaturen, 6 (Berlin, 1994), in *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 846–50, cited here because of its specific bearing upon the manuscripts traditionally associated with Reims, and in 'On Carolingian Book Painters: The Ottoboni Gospels and Its Transfiguration Master', *Art Bulletin*, 83 (2001), 209–39.

¹⁷ Chapter 1: 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, pp. 377–78; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 195.

¹⁸ Chapter 2: 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, pp. 378–79; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, pp. 195–96.

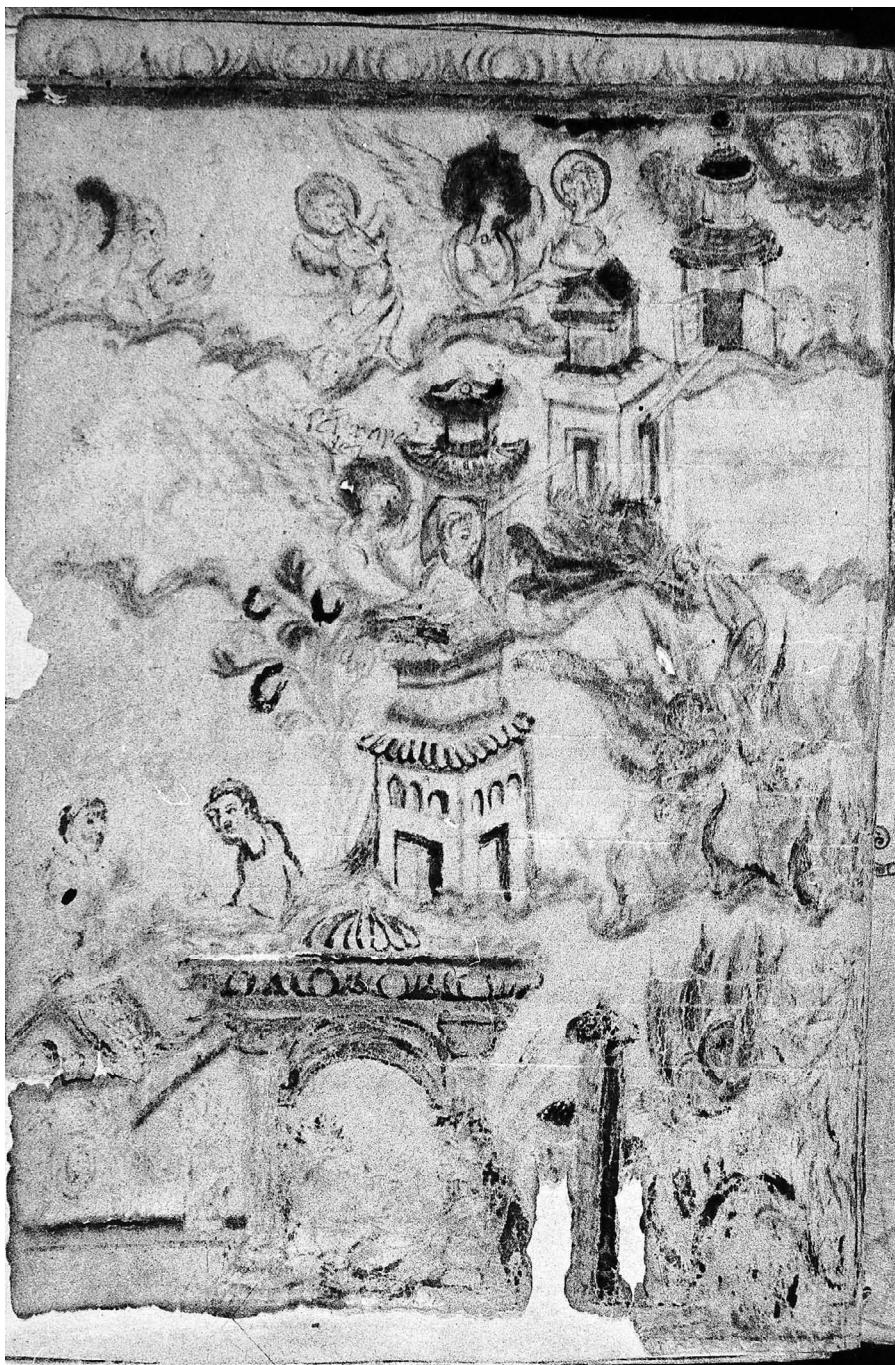


Fig. 2. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5, fol. 1^v, *Visio Baronti*, frontispiece miniature. By kind permission of the Russian National Library.

that Barontus's fate would be decided in heaven. Chapter four describes how Raphael plucked Barontus's soul, small as a hen's chick, from his body, leaving him with all his senses still operational.¹⁹ The bust-length form used for Barontus's soul may be an attempt to illustrate the text as literally as manageable. Chapter five tells how Raphael carried the soul into the air above the monastery where Barontus's brethren were praying, and over the neighbouring monastery of Millebeccus, whose abbot Leodaldus had a vision of Raphael's visit at just this moment, recounted in chapter six in support of the historicity of Barontus's heavenly visitation. The multi-storeyed building could then be taken literally, as the monastery of Longoretus or Millebeccus, although other readings, such as a portion of the landscape of paradise, can not be altogether ruled out.

The topmost register, above a wavy line separating earth and heaven, again shows at the centre Raphael still bearing the soul of Barontus, with more angels behind him, apparently those who came to his aid when attacked by many demons. Before Barontus is another structure with doors open in its lower storey, surely the first gate of Paradise, at which he finally arrived in chapter eight, the small heads in the upper corner most likely representing the departed brethren of his monastery of Longoretus whom he saw there. The five deceased brothers are all named: Corbolenus, the unfortunately named Fraudolenus, Austrulfus, Leodaldus, and finally Ebo, 'God's chosen servant'. The text rendered by the frontispiece ends here.

In chapter eight, his departed brothers pray that Barontus's upcoming judgement will lead to his forgiveness. In chapter nine, Raphael takes Barontus past the second heavenly gate, where he saw countless thousands of children praising God and a great throng of virgins and saints, who also prayed that Christ would win his soul from the devil. In chapter ten, Raphael and Barontus arrive at the third gate of Paradise, which looked like glass, where priests lived in houses of gold bricks, and where they saw splendid mansions. Chapter eleven reaches the fourth gate of Paradise, where another deceased brother tells Barontus that it is essential to keep lights burning all night in the church at Longoretus, and in all the churches of the world. Raphael and Barontus are then told they can go no further.

Chapter twelve opens with Raphael calling an angel to go and bring St Peter, and here, on fol. 8^v, the miniatures of the St Petersburg manuscript begin again, four following in quick succession. Both pages of the opening are illustrated with large figures (fig. 3). In the first, fol. 8^v, Raphael appears at the far left, holding a staff, speaking to the messenger angel at the centre. The soul of Barontus is not represented at all, the group at the right apparently being a crowd of other angels. After only five lines of text, St Peter appears on the facing recto, at the right, asking 'Brother Raphael'

¹⁹ For the importance of retaining body and bodily senses see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), p. 295. According to Peter Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 51, the *Visio Baronti* is the earliest example of what he terms the *Exstase* type, with the soul actually leaving the body in order to experience a vision.

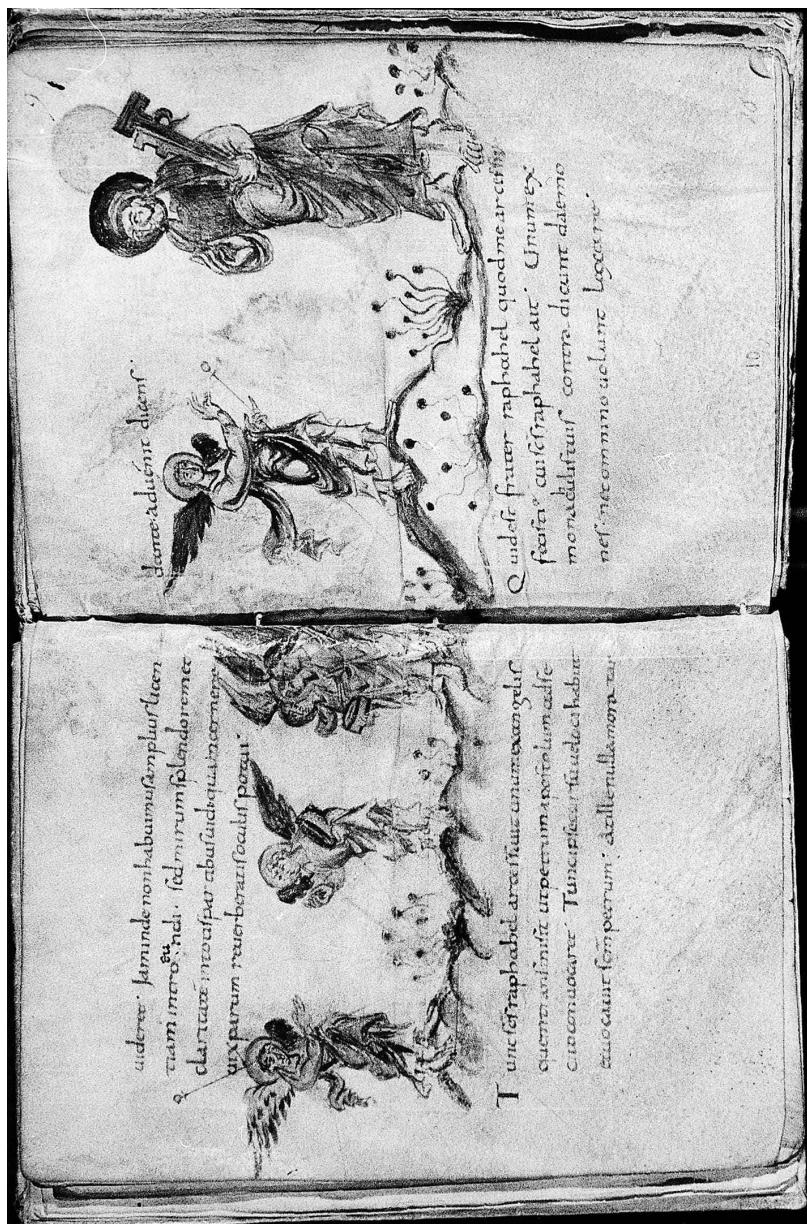


Fig. 3. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct. v. I.5, fol. 8v-9r, *Visio Baronti*, Raphael and angels/messenger angel and St Peter. By kind permission of the Russian National Library.

(*frater Raphahel*) why he has been sent for. Raphael, at the left, the form of the figure repeating the previous illustration, addresses Peter, who is obviously more important, if hierarchy of scale means anything, and also conforming to the text's clear implication that Peter is the higher power. Peter is a giant, and the great keys cradled in his left arm are immense.

The illustrations continue on the verso of the same leaf, fol. 9^v (fig. 4), where (still in chapter twelve) Barontus, now represented as restored to his full body (the miniature here in agreement with the explicit statement of the text), appears at the right, held between two winged creatures. These may initially seem to look like angels, but the text specifies that it is the demons who have hold of Barontus. It may be worth noting for early demon-iconography, which is a new development of the late eighth or ninth century, that the salient characteristic distinguishing these demons is their short tunics, easily distinguished from the flowing classicizing robes of the angels. It is difficult to describe the demons' faces, but surely noteworthy in terms of the later reception of the book that the leading demon's face seems to have been deliberately erased. The balance of chapter twelve narrates the judgement of Barontus's soul. The demons accuse him of having had three wives, also of other unspecified adulteries, along with many other sins including some that Barontus himself 'had totally forgotten'.²⁰ Peter responds to the demonic indictment by pointing out that Barontus had given alms, and had 'confessed his sins to priests and done penance', and had taken a monk's tonsure, concluding that 'these good deeds outweigh all the evil actions you recount. Know clearly that he is not your companion but ours'. The demons protest the decision and refuse to leave, until Peter draws his keys to strike them, at which they flee. Here is placed the fifth and final miniature of the series, on fol. 10^v (fig. 5), still in chapter twelve, showing St Peter raising his keys, the figure of Barontus meekly bowing before him, and the demons fleeing to exit at the right. This is only the midpoint of the text, which has twenty-two chapters in all and ends on fol. 18^r, followed by a blank verso before the short *Visio Rothcharii* begins on fol. 19^r (fig. 6), continuing to fol. 22^r. The illustrations are by no means equally distributed, but obviously focus upon one chapter of the text only, the judgement of the monk's soul, here not by Christ, but by Peter. There are many other issues in the text, issues studied recently by Yitzhak Hen,²¹ Claude Carozzi,²² and Peter Brown,²³ but the four large intra-textual illustrations are restricted to the judgement of the soul. Here consideration of the pictorial tradition is striking, especially images of

²⁰ Chapter 12: 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, p. 386; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 199. On this issue of the sins forgotten by Barontus see Peter Brown, 'Vers la naissance du Purgatoire: Amnistie et pénitence dans le Christianisme occidental de l'Antiquité tardive au Haut Moyen Age', *Annales. Histoire. Sciences Sociales* (1997), 1247–61 (p. 1257).

²¹ Hen, 'Visio Baronti'.

²² Claude Carozzi, *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'au-delà d'après la littérature latine (Ve–XIIIe siècle)* (Rome, 1994), pp. 138–86.

²³ Brown, 'Naissance du purgatoire'.



A contrabecus petrus uenusto uultu conuen-
sus ad ipsos dixit. Quod huic monacho
habeat crimen obponere. et daemones dixe-
runt. principalia uitia. Et petrus
dicte illa. Et illidicunt. Tres mulieres
habuit. quod ei non lucuerat. Excepti perpe-
travit alia ad uiteria quam plurima. et

Fig. 4. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5, fol. 9^v,
Visio Baronti, Barontus led before St Peter by demons.
By kind permission of the Russian National Library.



Fig. 5. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5, fol. 10^v, *Visio Baronti*, St Peter saves Barontus and drives away the demons.
By kind permission of the Russian National Library.

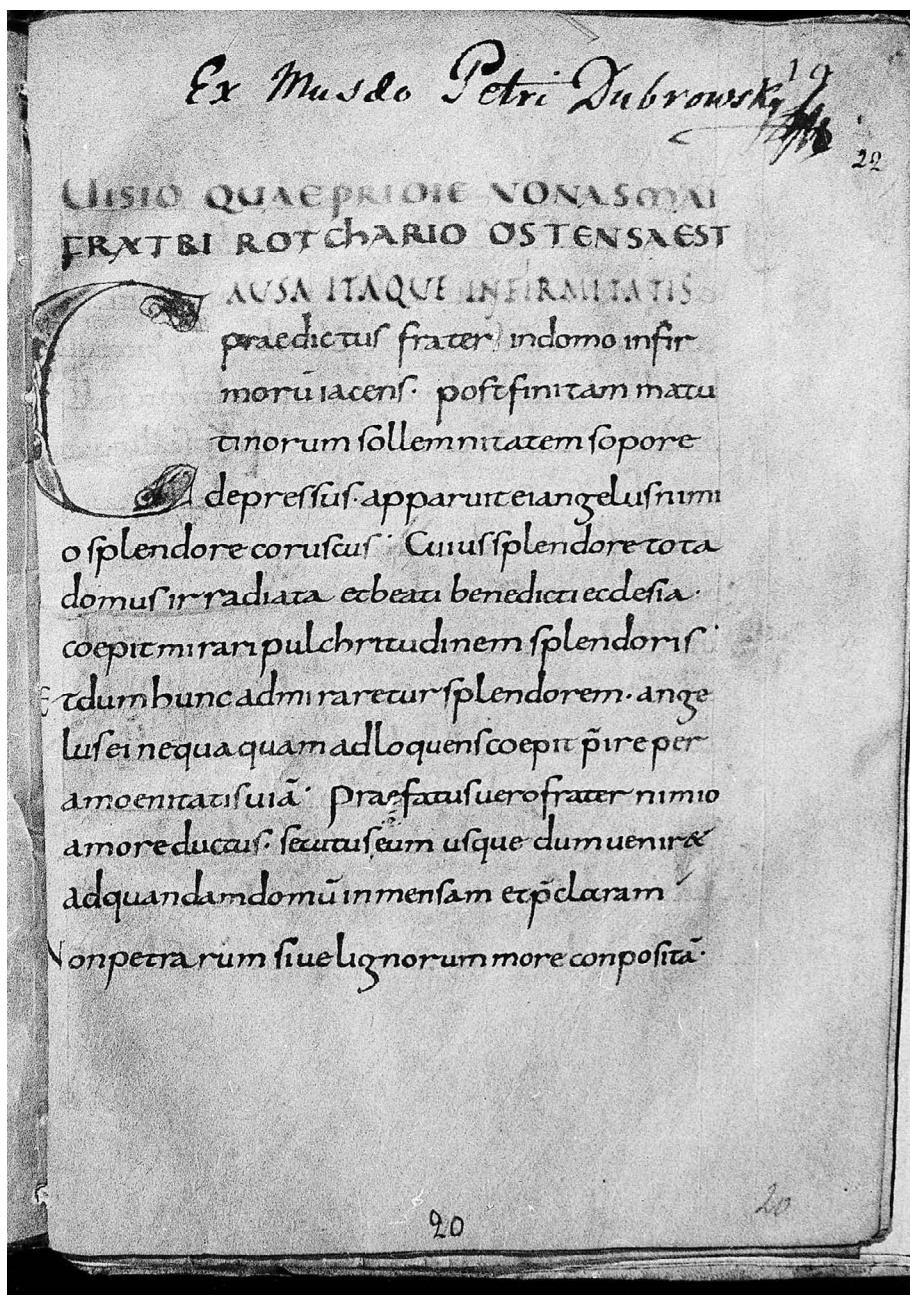


Fig. 6. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, cod. lat. Oct.v.I.5, fol. 19^r, *Visio Rothcharii*, opening and initial. By kind permission of the Russian National Library.

the Last Judgement, a vision of the future recorded in Matthew's Gospel.²⁴ We have few if any illustrations of the Last Judgement from the Carolingian period, although Beat Brenk some years ago studied the wall paintings at Müstair, concluding that the paintings were from the early ninth century, drawing upon earlier, primarily eastern, pictorial traditions, presumably similar to the composition in the eleventh-century Byzantine Gospels manuscript in Paris (fig. 7).²⁵ Those even a little familiar with later western images can not fail to be struck by the resemblances of the St Petersburg compositions to those that would follow. For example, Giotto's version from the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua has the same formal structure, hell to the lower viewer's right, Christ's sinister side, with flames rising up toward the central motif, as they rise toward the central image of Barontus's soul in the St Petersburg manuscript.²⁶ Striking in the St Petersburg manuscript cycle as a whole is the role of Peter, for although he can play a large role in many works, for example at the side of Christ on the great Autun tympanum by Gislebertus,²⁷ it is always Christ, not Peter, who is the final judge. The best-known Last Judgement painting is the immense wall of the Sistine Chapel, recently restored, whose central figure of Christ (fig. 8) striding, turning, and raising high one arm rather than seated upon a throne so strongly breaks with tradition, but so eerily recalls the pose of Peter in the St Petersburg manuscript (fig. 5).²⁸

This manuscript remains virtually unstudied, and this study hopes to raise, more than definitively answer, the questions that it poses. First a word about the textual

²⁴ Yves Christe, *La vision de Matthieu (Matt. XXIV–XXV): Origines et développement d'une image de la seconde parousie* (Paris, 1973).

²⁵ Beat Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends: Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes* (Graz, 1966), pp. 107–30. Several important Carolingian illustrated manuscripts present imagery often associated with the Last Judgement, but as they are within the context of the Apocalypse text, just at this time shifting in its usual interpretation from an allegorical to an 'endzeitlich' or parousiac emphasis, it seems best to leave those out of consideration here. See for discussion of this issue Josef Engemann, 'Auf die Parusie Christi hinweisende Darstellungen in der frühchristlichen Kunst', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 19 (1976), 139–56. For the Byzantine manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, cod. gr. 74, fol. 51^v, see Henri Omont, *Evangiles avec peintures byzantines du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1908), and Viktor Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin, 1967), pp. 187–92, fig. 194.

²⁶ On Giotto's Arena Chapel see Bruce Cole, *Giotto and Florentine Painting 1280–1375* (New York, 1976), pp. 63–95, and more recently Hayden B. J. Maginnis, *Painting in the Age of Giotto: A Historical Reevaluation* (University Park, 1997), pp. 79–102, both with further bibliography.

²⁷ Linda Seidel, *Legends in Limestone: Lazarus, Gislebertus, and the Cathedral of Autun* (Chicago, 1999), is the most recent discussion, and stimulating, although I am not persuaded by her argument that the famous inscription GISLEBERTUS HOC FECIT on the tympanum does not refer to the sculptor who made it.

²⁸ Loren Partridge, Fabrizio Mancinelli, and Gianluigi Colalucci, *Michelangelo, the Last Judgement: A Glorious Restoration* (New York, 1997), p. 9 and pls 2, 112, and 141.



Fig. 7. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. gr. 74, fol. 51^v, Last Judgement.
By kind permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Fig. 8. Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, from the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City, detail of Christ. *By kind permission of the Musei Vaticani.*

transmission. Among the nearly thirty manuscripts known, Levison lists only one, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, cod. 8216–18, as earlier in date than St Petersburg, suggesting an early-ninth-century date for this codex of the lives of the Egyptian fathers into which the *Visio Baronti* was inserted.²⁹ The Brussels codex bears a date 819, and Bernhard Bischoff has accepted that this date applies to all the material contained in the codex, which he believes was written by the Regensburg deacon, Ellenhart.³⁰ The

²⁹ ‘Visio Baronti’, ed. Levison, p. 372: ‘Vitas patrum Aegyptiorum continet, quibus idem librarius, nulla praescriptione adiecta, fol. 50–60 Visionem Baronti inseruit.’

³⁰ See Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog des festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1998), no. 722, p. 155. For a reproduction of the page with the dating

manuscript had no illustrations, not even of a key alone. Is it not possible that some of the considerable fortune of the *Visio Baronti* text in the later Carolingian and subsequent periods has to do with its splendid revival and presentation in the St Petersburg codex? That manuscript offers many clues, one of which is textual.

The other vision text in the St Petersburg codex is the unique *Visio Rothcharii*, not yet edited, and known only from Wilhelm Wattenbach's 1875 transcription. The script in which it is written shows it clearly to be from the same time and place as the *Visio Baronti* portion of the manuscript, and presumably from a single campaign of production (fig. 6).³¹ It seems to me likely that this text depends directly upon the *Visio Baronti* for at least its mise en scène with sick monk, angelic guide, and visit to a multi-gated heaven with splendid mansions. Rotcharius's main point is very different, however: apparently to report, in direct contrast to the famous earlier ninth-century *Visio Wettini*, that Charlemagne was no longer being tormented for his sins of lust, but thanks to the prayers of his faithful men had been brought to heavenly glory.³² Clearly this text brings us to the controversies and political culture surrounding the Carolingian court in the middle years of the ninth century. It is no accident that Paul Dutton discusses the Vision of Rotcharius in his book *The Politics of Dreaming*,³³ and Claude Carozzi discussed it in connection with the *Visio Wettini* and other Carolingian texts in a chapter entitled 'Visions Politiques'.³⁴ It is my contention that the same context explains not the origin of the *Visio Baronti* text, but its appearance in the St Petersburg manuscript. Carozzi's admittedly tentative speculation that Rotcharius's vision originated at Reichenau strikes

clause see Therese Gloreux-De Gand and Ann Kelders, eds, *Formules de copiste: Les Colophons des manuscrits datés* (Brussels, 1991), no. 1.

³¹ Wilhelm Wattenbach, 'Aus Petersburger Handschriften', *Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit*, n.f., 22 (1875), 73–74.

³² For the *Visio Wettini* see the earlier prose text by Haito, *Poetae latini carolini aevi*, vol. II, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, MGH, Poet., 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 267–75, rendered into English in *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*, trans. by Eileen Gardiner (New York, 1989), pp. 65–79 and 244–45. For the later versified text by Walahfrid Strabo, see *Poetae latini carolini aevi*, vol. II, ed. by Dümmler, pp. 303–34, and D. A. Traill, *Walahfrid Strabo's Visio Wettini: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Berlin, 1974). That the *Visio Rothcharii* reverses the essentially political judgement of the *Visio Wettini* was also noted by Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 123.

³³ Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, NE, 1994), pp. 61–63. For a recent discussion of the uses to which dreams were put in ecclesiastical contexts, see Carolyn M. Carty, 'The Role of Medieval Dream Images in Authenticating Ecclesiastical Construction', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 62 (1999), 45–90, which touches upon the imperial dream leading to the discovery and translation of Charlemagne's body (p. 60). For a further discussion of this further and now literal 'rehabilitation' of Charlemagne, a process begun with Einhard's biography and the *Visio Rothcharii*, see Stephen G. Nichols, *Romanesque Signs: Early Medieval Narrative and Iconography* (New Haven, 1983), pp. 66–94.

³⁴ Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 341–46.

me as very weak,³⁵ and an origin in Reims should be considered. There a text rehabilitating Charlemagne may have had a great political resonance in the court culture and politics of the 840s, especially after the battle of Fontenoy in 842 firmly established Charlemagne's grandson and namesake, Charles the Bald, on the west Frankish throne.³⁶

How can we address the questions posed by the St Petersburg codex, the reasons for its production and especially for its unusual, indeed extraordinary, pictorial decoration? What have these illustrations of a Merovingian monk's vision of his fate to do with the theme of court culture in the early Middle Ages? First, such an illustrated manuscript is unique, and clearly calls for some special explanation. Regarding it as a chance survival of a once extensive class seems to me perverse, and also a counsel of despair. Why did anyone choose this older text as the basis for a unique series of illustrations? My tentative responses to these questions can only be regarded as a first effort, and an effort necessarily speculative, but in hopes of better understanding the manuscript it is essential to address the linked questions of place, time, artist, patron, and finally historical context.

Place is the easy question. The script is a Caroline minuscule of the sort usually associated with Reims in the mid-ninth century, and indeed there is a note in the manuscript that it formerly belonged to the library of St Remi in that city.³⁷ Further, an eleventh–twelfth-century manuscript still in Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale, cod. 1412,

³⁵ Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 344–45. The argument is essentially that the *Visio Rothcharii* certainly and most obviously depends upon the *Visio Wettini*, knowledge of which can not be proven at Reims before the later years of Hincmar's life, which Carozzi regards as later than the date of the St Petersburg manuscript. Since the *Visio Wettini* originated at Reichenau, he thinks it likely that the *Visio Rothcharii* did as well. In essence, then, the case depends upon the absence of evidence demonstrating knowledge of the *Visio Wettini* text at Reims at mid-century. However, Dutton's development of the central importance of the Vision genre, of which the *Visio Wettini* stands at the head, at Reims in general and in the orbit of Hincmar in particular, makes it seem very likely that the text was indeed known there, and Carozzi himself immediately follows his discussion of the *Visio Rothcharii* with discussion of Reims material. It seems strange to imagine that the *Visio Wettini* originated at Reichenau in two versions, one prose and one verse, in the 820s and 830s respectively, and was widely known and influential in the Frankish world but never reached Reims until perhaps the 870s, while the *Visio Rothcharii* also originated at Reichenau, in the 840s, and was transmitted to Reims within a few years of its composition, although it was neither copied nor known in any other Carolingian centre.

³⁶ On Charles the Bald's evocation of his grandfather's heritage see Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 13, 97, 149, 168, 223–24, 236, 242, and 247, and William Diebold, “*Nos quoque morem illius imitari cupientes*”: Charles the Bald's Evocation and Imitation of Charlemagne’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 75 (1993), 271–300.

³⁷ On fol. 1' at the top, probably in a later medieval hand, ‘S. Remigii Remensis’, and at the bottom ‘Ex Museo Petri Dubrovsky’. The manuscript entered Dubrovsky's collection at the time of the French Revolution, in 1791, shortly thereafter being taken to St Petersburg, where it entered the Imperial Library (now Russian National Library) in 1805.

which came there from the library of St Thierry in the city, was according to Levison copied directly from the St Petersburg volume.³⁸ Would that we always had such strong evidence for localization. The quality of the illustrations is assuredly by no means equal to the best manuscripts associated with Carolingian Reims, such as the famous Gospels manuscript made for Archbishop Ebo probably before 844.³⁹ However, the rapid drawing styles are related, as are such motifs as the irregular ground line above the Ebo Gospels' evangelist Matthew (fol. 18^v),⁴⁰ visible also in the St Petersburg book throughout. The motif is not a Reims invention,⁴¹ but is assuredly a Reims fixture, found also in the Gospels, now Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale, cod. 7 (fig. 9). That book was given by Ebo's successor Hincmar to the abbey of St Thierry after 844, and probably well before Hincmar's death in 882,⁴² and thus shows the deployment of the same style for several decades either side of 850, which I take to be the appropriate range for the production of the St Petersburg codex.

Janie Curry's 1992 article had as its primary aim to connect the St Petersburg manuscript with the art of Reims, offering a comparison to the most famous Reims-associated manuscript, the Utrecht Psalter,⁴³ which is in general terms the best early medieval parallel for such vivid visualization of scenes of heaven and hell. Like the St Petersburg manuscript, the Utrecht Psalter opens with a full-page miniature comprising several different registers, while the remainder of the illustrations are set longitudinally, interrupting text columns (fig. 10). There are also many specific parallels in motif, for example the architecture of the large building at the bottom of the St Petersburg page and an illustration to Psalm 112, fol. 65^v, the many half-length figures, flying angels

³⁸ 'Visio Baronti', ed. by Levison, p. 372.

³⁹ Koehler and Mütherich, *Schule von Reims*, pp. 73–84, pls 10–20, and Koert van der Horst, William Noel, and Wilhelmina C. M. Wüstefeld, *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art: Picturing the Psalms of David* (Utrecht, 1996), no. 6. For the best available selection of colour plates known to me see Wolfgang Braunfels, *Die Welt der Karolinger und ihre Kunst* (Munich, 1968), pls XXXVIa–d. The St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript does not appear in the second part of the Reims volume *Die karolingischen Miniaturen*, Wilhelm Koehler and Florentine Mütherich, *Die Schule von Reims, Part 2: Von der Mitte bis zum Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1999).

⁴⁰ Braunfels, *Welt der Karolinger*, pl. XXXVIa.

⁴¹ It already appears in Italian books like the so-called Gospels of St Augustine in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, cod. 286, for which see Francis Wormald, *The Miniatures in the Gospels of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1954), and most recently and exhaustively, Mildred Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Kalamazoo, 1997), no. 1.

⁴² Van der Hoerst, Noel, and Wüstefeld, *Utrecht Psalter*, no. 10, unfortunately illustrated with a very misleadingly darkened colour plate. For a much more accurate colour reproduction, see Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher, and Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *The Carolingian Renaissance* (New York, 1970), pl. 105.

⁴³ Curry, 'Illustrated *Visio Baronti*', *passim*.

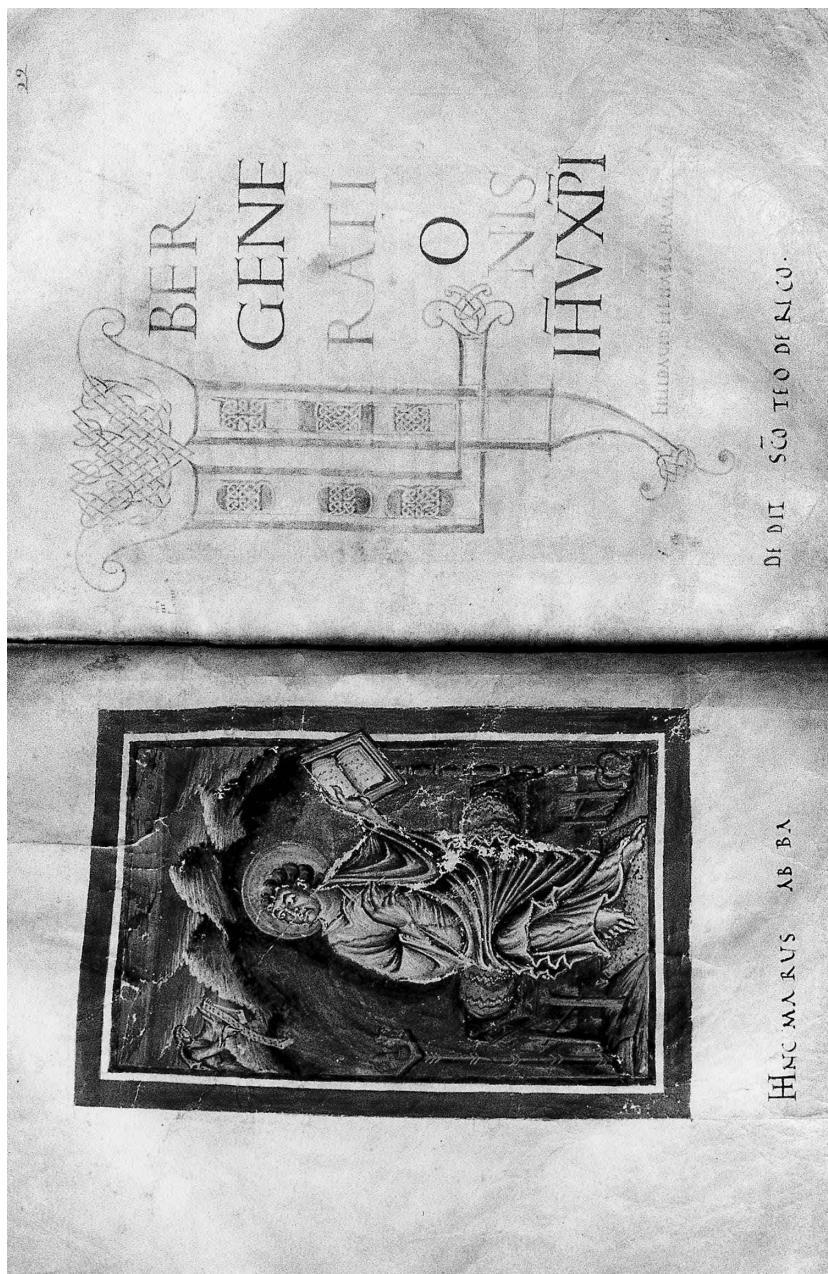


Fig. 9. Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, cod. 7, fols 21^v-22^r, Gospels of Hincmar from St-Thierry, Evangelist Matthew and initial to Matthew. (photo, L. Nees)

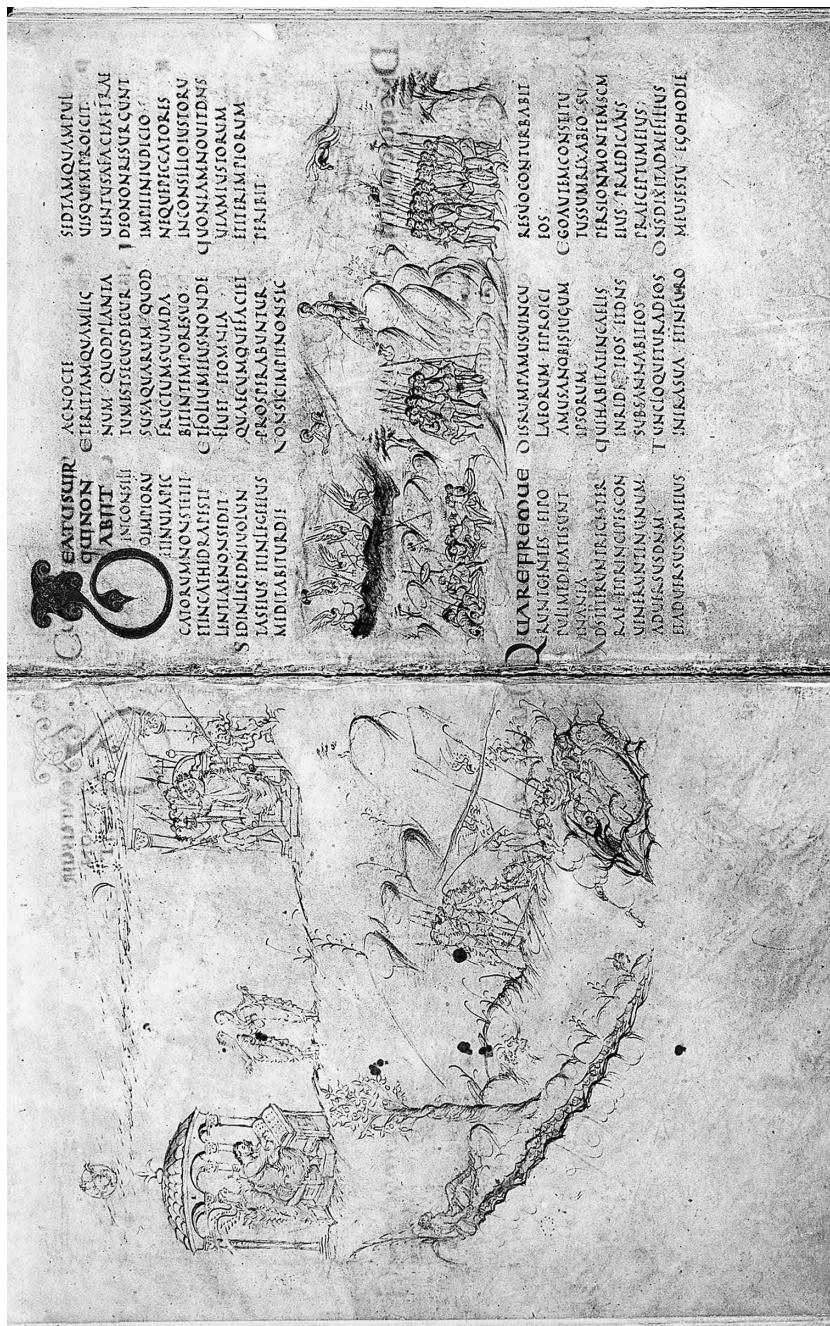


Fig. 10. Utrecht, University Library, MS 32, fols 1^v–2^r, Utrecht Psalter, illustrations to Psalms 1 and 2.
By kind permission of the University Library.

presenting offerings, tall towers, and vividly gesticulating, active figures.⁴⁴ Of course many of these motifs are associated not only with Reims, having spread with particular force into the works associated with the patronage of Charles the Bald, wherever those might have been produced, including not only manuscripts but ivory carvings such as the cover now on the *Pericopes* of Emperor Henry II, now Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4452 (fig. 11),⁴⁵ with its multi-storied tower like that of the *St Petersburg* book (fig. 2), or the multi-register composition still on the front cover of Charles the Bald's *Psalter* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. 1152.⁴⁶ Figures like the humble Barontus standing before St Peter with head lowered and forward and hands outstretched (fig. 5) recall a type common in the *Utrecht Psalter*, as for example in the memorable scene of David before Nathan, acknowledging his sin with Bathsheba. That is a unique miniature in one respect among the manuscript's 150 illustrations to the Psalms, being the only one illustrating the *titulus* giving the circumstances of the Psalm's composition rather than the Psalm text itself.⁴⁷ Preceding the important penitential Psalm 50 in the *Utrecht Psalter*, this miniature offers a parallel in both form and content to the *St Petersburg* illustrations, since the sins of Barontus, of David, and for that matter of Charlemagne in the *Visio Wettini* and in the sanitized *Visio Rothcharii* all have to do with sexual transgressions. An even closer formal comparison to the figure of the penitent and petitioning Barontus is offered by the figure of David on the back cover of Charles the Bald's previously mentioned *Psalter*, Paris BNF, cod. 1152 (fig. 12). Such evidence helps to locate the *St Petersburg Visio Baronti* manuscript and its illustrations, most likely in the decade before or the decades after 850, in Reims or

⁴⁴ Space does not permit an exhaustive catalogue of comparisons. Here are a few, referring to the *St Petersburg* manuscript as SP and the *Utrecht Psalter* as U. For SP fol. 1^v, compare the flying angel at the centre to that in U, fol. 5^r, the crowd of figures at the upper left to that in U, fol. 10^v, the architecture in the upper right to that in U, fol. 14^v, the architecture at the centre to U, fol. 27^v, the upper torso of the angel carrying Barontus's soul to the half-length angel presenting a book to Christ, who writes in it, in U, fol. 78^r, or the half-length figure representing the soul to U, fol. 89^r. For SP, fol. 9^v, compare the devils to those at the lower left in U, fol. 3^v, with their raised wings, short tunics, and splayed legs, the devil dragging Barontus to that below and to Christ's right in U, fol. 64^r, or the gesture of Barontus to the figure at the bottom left of U, fol. 14^v.

⁴⁵ See Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser* (Berlin, 1914), no. 41. On the manuscripts associated with Charles see Wilhelm Koehler and Florentine Mütherich, *Die Hofschule Karls des Kahlen*, Die Karolingischen Miniaturen, 5 (Berlin, 1982).

⁴⁶ Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, no. 40.

⁴⁷ See Van der Hoerst, Noel, and Wüstefeld, *Utrecht Psalter*, p. 70. For a discussion of this episode in Carolingian art, see Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991), pp. 263–67, and Christoph Eggenberger, *Psaltereum aureum Sancti Galli* (Sigmaringen, 1987), pp. 162–65.



Fig. 11. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4452, Pericopes of Emperor Henry II, ivory cover, Crucifixion and Resurrection.
By kind permission of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

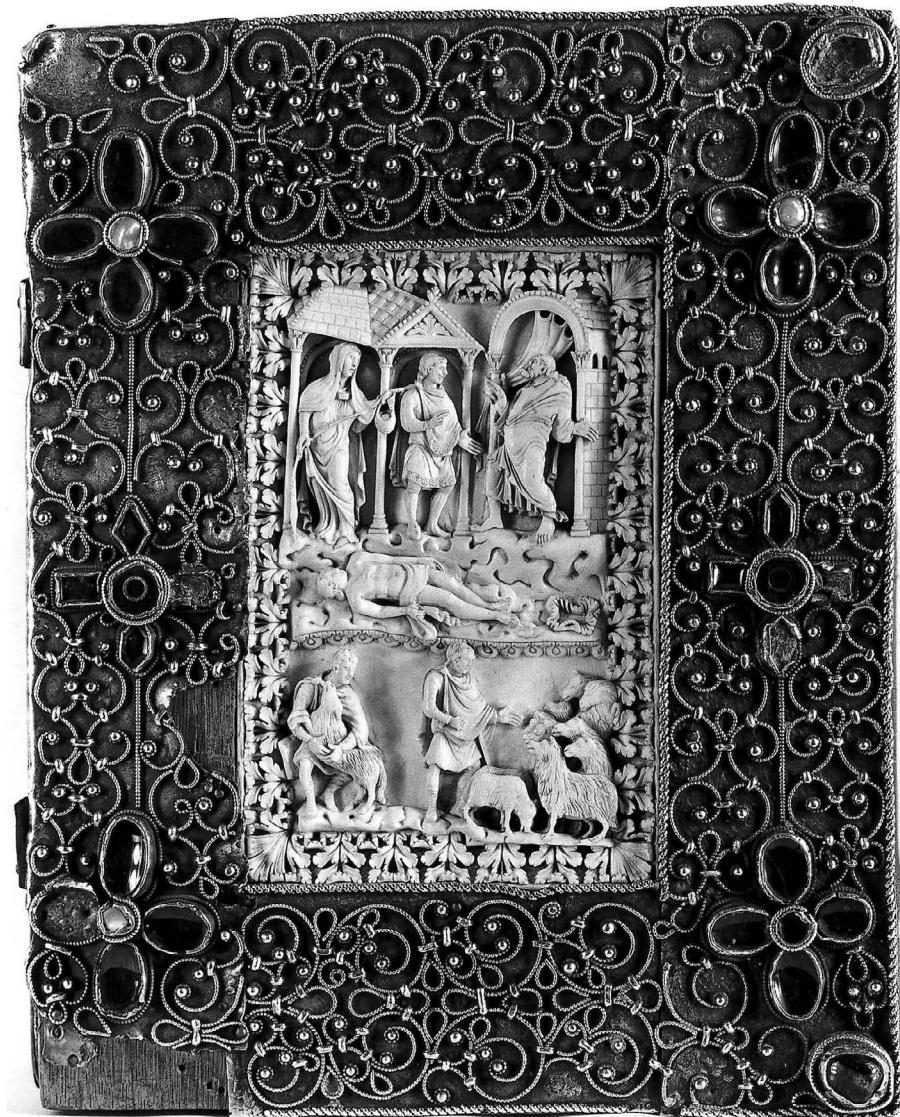


Fig. 12. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. 1152, Psalter of Charles the Bald, ivory cover on back of the manuscript, the penitence of David before Nathan.

By kind permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

perhaps in some association with the court of Charles the Bald, in my own view also connecting its painter with the artists of the Utrecht Psalter and Charles's 'Court School'. Yet all of this does little to explain the circumstances surrounding the manuscript's conception and production.

The studies of recent years devoted to the text of the *Visio Baronti* have tended to deal with it in general terms, as a work of early medieval literature. Yitzhak Hen's article sought to discuss the origin of the text in its seventh-century Merovingian monastic context, concentrating on the introduction of the ritual of private penance from Ireland to the continent.⁴⁸ Claude Carozzi's extended analysis treats it in relation not only to its Frankish context but in relation to its Irish and Merovingian analogues.⁴⁹ Taking an even broader stance, Carol Zaleski made extensive use of the text's treatment of the separation of soul and body in her study of Otherworld journeys.⁵⁰ None of these scholars deals with manuscripts, or more specific contexts for production and or particularly reception, or address the reading community in which the text was considered. Moreover, no one has noted that the text devotes considerable space to a monk in heaven by the name of Ebo. Ebo is described in the *Visio Baronti* as a priest who, when Barontus came upon him in heaven, was 'celebrating the mysteries of the Apostles in church' (*misteria apostolorum in ecclesia caelebaret*), and when he made the sign of the cross 'great splendour shone from his arms and fingers' (*ut coepit manus suas ad signandum levare, mirus splendor coepit per eius brachia et digita radiare*). He is identified by Barontus as a man of 'high birth' (*de generatione inclita*) who had followed the Lord's teaching (Matthew 19. 21) when 'he gave up all his early possessions [...] always ready to give alms, he traded temporal payments for eternal rewards' (*dereliquid omnem possessionem terrenam [...] cuius manus semper fuerunt largae ad elemosynam dandam; erogandam transitoriam mercabat aeternam*). 'It was because of this and other good deeds that his fingers and arms shone with light' (*Ista et alia bona faciendo refulserunt eius digita et brachia*).⁵¹ Two long chapters (chapters fourteen and fifteen) are devoted to him, as well as the initial mention in chapter eight.⁵²

The prominent occurrence of someone named Ebo in a most unusual private book apparently connected with the region of Reims around the mid-ninth century seems a most unlikely coincidence, for a very famous Ebo was Archbishop of Reims from 816 until his deposition in 835. Foster-brother of Emperor Louis the Pious, although of famously low rather than high birth, Ebo betrayed Louis to support his son Lothair's

⁴⁸ Hen, 'Visio Baronti'.

⁴⁹ Carozzi, *Voyage*.

⁵⁰ Carol Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 45–54.

⁵¹ Chapter 15: 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, pp. 389–90; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, pp. 201–02.

⁵² 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, pp. 388–90; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, pp. 201–02.

temporarily successful rebellion of 833, which led to Louis's forced public penance.⁵³ Ebo lost his see when Louis returned to power the next year. Ebo was confined in effect as a prisoner at Fleury, but was briefly restored to the see of Reims by Lothair after his father's death in 840.⁵⁴ After Lothair's defeat in the great battle of Fontenoy on 25 June 841 by his younger brothers Louis the German and Charles the Bald, Ebo was again driven from Reims. Although the long vacancy at Reims served to Charles the Bald's advantage, allowing him to administer the see's *temporalia*, he finally appointed Hincmar to the see in April 845, while Ebo was still alive. One result of this situation was that, at least until Ebo accepted appointment to the see of Hildesheim by Emperor Lothair a few years before his death in 851, there seems to have been a party among the Reims clergy of Ebo supporters, in opposition to Hincmar. Hincmar's perhaps characteristic response was slow in coming but must have been devastating: as late as 859 he caused the Synod of Savonnières to depose all the remaining priests, deacons, and subdeacons who had been appointed by Ebo.⁵⁵ I would like to propose the hypothesis that the production of the St Petersburg illuminated manuscript of the *Visio Baronti* should be associated with the struggle among supporters of the Ebo and Hincmar factions, conceivably if not necessarily within the see of Reims. Adding to the text's interest in this context, it continues, immediately after the passage in which Ebo figures so prominently, with a visit to hell, where Barontus saw among the thousands of condemned men and women two bishops.⁵⁶

⁵³ I know of no modern scholarly biography of Ebo. For his deposition see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London, 1983), p. 173, and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 92. For Hincmar there is a three-volume biography by J. Devissé, *Hincmar, archevêque de Reims, 854–882*, 3 vols (Geneva, 1975–76). Medieval orthography varies, and the Archbishop of Reims is cited in various works as Ebbo as well as Ebo. The latter is now generally preferred, but the former is used in Levison's edition of the *Visio Baronti*; it may be noted that Ebo is the (unusual) reading in the St Petersburg manuscript and, according to Levison's apparatus, in no other.

⁵⁴ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 109.

⁵⁵ See McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 189.

⁵⁶ Chapter 17: 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, p. 391; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 202. The two bishops, named Vulfoleodus and Dido, are termed *episcopi*, but their sees are not given. Hillgarth follows Levison in linking them with seventh-century bishops of Bourges and Poitiers respectively. In a recent lecture at the International Medieval Conference at Kalamazoo, 1999, entitled 'Abbot Mellobaudis and the Transformation of the Roman World', Ian Wood cited Bishop Dido of Poitiers as the figure likely condemned in the *Visio Baronti*, and termed him 'up to his neck in politics'. Dido of Poitiers accompanied King Dagobert II to Ireland and thereby facilitated the usurpation by Childebert, an interesting case in connection with the ninth-century involvement of bishops of Reims with royal politics, usurpation, and deposition. I am grateful to Professor Wood for allowing me to see the text of his lecture.

One might well ask how this illustrated manuscript of the vision of a long-dead monk from a different region of France could have special relevance to a personal and political quarrel at Reims. The possible answer is indirect, but not for that reason less compelling. Peter Brown's recent article on 'the birth of Purgatory' effectively outlines an important debate on the fate of the Christian souls, dividing two 'imaginative structures', to use his term, one emphasizing the purgation of sins during life and after death, the other emphasizing the divine prerogative of exercising mercy.⁵⁷ Brown introduces the *Visio Baronti* text as an important witness to the former structure of an individual's ability to purge the self, coming out of the Irish penitential system, with which Hen had also linked the origin of the text.⁵⁸ Here we face another strange coincidence. One of the outstanding disputes of the late 840s and 850s, indeed the most actively debated by many prominent ecclesiastics over a period lasting more than a decade, was the debate over the Predestinarian ideas of Gottschalk of Orbais. Gottschalk had emphasized the double predestination of the elect to salvation and the evil to damnation, which entailed among other things revisiting exactly the issue of the individual's responsibility for winning salvation through sacramental performance and moral virtue as opposed to the essential reliance upon God's mercy and God's choice.⁵⁹ In a political climate seemingly obsessed with interpreting recent disasters as the just punishment for sins, the debate went to the core of contemporary concerns.⁶⁰ The opposition to Gottschalk's emphasis upon the latter of Brown's 'imaginative structures' was led by Hincmar of Reims, and Hincmar seems likely to have been correct in linking Gottschalk's supporters to the supporters of his predecessor Ebo.⁶¹ Indeed Hincmar's opponents, supporters of Gottschalk, included Lotharingian bishops such as Ebo of Grenoble, namesake and nephew of the deposed archbishop, and Janet Nelson has suggested that the debate also reflects the

⁵⁷ Brown, 'Naissance du Purgatoire', p. 1250.

⁵⁸ Hen, 'Visio Baronti', pp. 488–93.

⁵⁹ For a discussion see David Ganz, 'The Debate on Predestination', in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. by Margaret Gibson and Janet Nelson, British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 101 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 353–73, reprinted in the revised edition of the collection (London, 1990) with an additional note, p. 302, with more recent bibliography. I have learned much from the discussion in a draft version of Celia Chazelle's *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 165–208, which focuses upon the role of the crucifixion in the controversy.

⁶⁰ David Ganz, 'Theology and the Organization of Thought', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, c. 700–c. 900, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 767–73, and Rob Meens, 'Politics, Mirrors of Princes and the Bible: Sins, Kings and the Well-Being of the Realm', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 345–57.

⁶¹ See Hincmar Rhemesis Archiepiscopi, *De praedestinatione dei et libero arbitrio. Posterior dissertatio adversus Godescalcum et caeteros praedestinationos*, PL, 125, cols 65–474, esp. 385–86, cited with discussion by Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 168.

rivalry between west and middle Frankish rulers and their ecclesiastical supporters.⁶² Given that the Gottschalk controversy turned upon the issue of the soul's fate, the subject of the illustrations of the *Visio Baronti* manuscript in St Petersburg, the likelihood that we are faced with more than merely a 'coincidence' grows much stronger.

Reading images as theological statements can be very difficult, given the often slippery ambiguity of the visual signs, which may be interpreted in differing and even contradictory ways by different viewers. That ninth-century Carolingian artists and patrons were powerfully engaged in 'theologizing' imagery seems overwhelmingly clear, especially during the second quarter of the ninth century. The popularity of Hrabanus Maurus's elaborate picture-poems with commentary, *De laudibus sanctae crucis*, several manuscripts of which were produced in this period for important ecclesiastics, is perhaps the clearest and best-known example.⁶³ Recent studies have suggested that the well-known illustrations of the Utrecht Psalter were not only 'literal' illustrations and in some cases perhaps based upon ancient sources, but included imagery that related to contemporary theological controversies and ecclesiastical politics.⁶⁴ The illustrations added to a few examples of the many luxury Bibles produced at Tours have been interpreted by scholars as having often elaborate and recondite theological programmes, although the trend of recent scholarship has shifted from seeing such programmes as inherited from early Christian sources now lost, and instead connects them with the contemporary Carolingian context.⁶⁵ Conrad Rudolph has recently suggested that a miniature of the Creation, accompanying Genesis in the Moutier-Grandval Bible (London, British Library, cod. Add. 10546, fol. 5v), departs from both the biblical text and traditional (and later) iconographic patterns in order to rebut Gottschalk's ideas

⁶² Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 168–69.

⁶³ Michele Camillo Ferrari, 'Hrabanica: Hrabans "De laudibus sanctae crucis" im Spiegel der neueren Forschung', in *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, ed. by Gangolf Schrimpf (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 493–526. The most recent edition of the text, containing also colour reproductions of all the picture-pages in Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Reg. lat. 124, is *Rabani Mauri, In honorem Sanctae Crucis*, ed. by Michel Perrin, CCCC, 100 (Turnhout, 1997). There is a colour facsimile of the Vienna manuscript, *Hrabanus Maurus, Liber de laudibus sanctae crucis: Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat des Codex Vindobonensis 652 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, ed. by Kurt Holter (Graz, 1973). Reaching me too late to be taken into account here is Michele Camillo Ferrari, *Il Liber sanctae crucis di Rabano Mauro: Testo – immagine – contesto* (Bern, 1999).

⁶⁴ Celia Chazelle, 'Archbishops Ebo and Hincmar of Reims and the Utrecht Psalter', *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 1055–77, reprinted in *Approaches to Early-Medieval Art*, ed. by Lawrence Nees (Cambridge, MA, 1998), pp. 97–119.

⁶⁵ See Paul Edward Dutton and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald* (Ann Arbor, 1997), pp. 21–44, 89–101, with references to earlier literature and particularly to Kessler's earlier publications.

about predestination.⁶⁶ Much as I would like to believe that Gottschalk's ideas were indeed 'at play' in Carolingian manuscript illustration of the 840s, especially at Tours, Rudolph's hypothesis as presented in passing in the course of developing a larger argument is not fully developed and hence plausible but not persuasive.⁶⁷ However, whether or not this interesting interpretation is accepted in relation to Gottschalk's ideas and their reception, it does clearly remind us that iconographic programmes can be independent of the text, changing while the text that they 'illustrate' remains unaltered.

In the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript, it seems that the (inherited) text and (newly composed) illustrations do not necessarily tell the same story. Indeed, the illustrations emphatically show the visionary monk Barontus as playing no part whatsoever in his own salvation, his protection from the sad fate to which his own sins would have condemned him being entirely due to the intervention of his guardian angel and of St Peter. The visual language of the illustrations underscores such an interpretation, for they consistently show the monk Barontus as a small, sometimes partial, always passive, indeed literally cringing figure, the object of the actions of the larger and more vigorous demons, angels, and ultimately St Peter. Although the text has Peter say that Barontus will be saved because his good works have outweighed his sins,⁶⁸ we see in the illustrations no works at all, good or ill, but rather a monk whose fate is determined by a struggle between the powers of hell and the Church. In effect, the illustrations could be seen as at least consistent with a Predestinarian interpretation, and would on that level be unlikely to have appealed to Hincmar. On the other hand, however, Hincmar would perhaps have appreciated the prominent role given by the illustrations to Peter, representing the Church in general and the episcopacy in particular, and helping an individual to win salvation. It is even possible to imagine that the manuscript with its illustrations might have been made at the direct behest, or at least with the imagined support of Hincmar after Ebo's death in 851, as some kind of peace offering, generosity after having won.⁶⁹ The imagery may be read in different ways, it seems, and without imagining that the designer of the illustrations was a post-modernist before his time who

⁶⁶ Conrad Rudolph, 'In the Beginning: Theories and Images of Creation in Northern Europe in the Twelfth Century', *Art History*, 22 (1999), 3–55 (p. 31).

⁶⁷ The Moutier-Grandval Bible is not firmly dated, but universally believed to be earlier than the Vivian Bible/first Bible of Charles the Bald, for which Dutton and Kessler, *Poetry and Paintings*, pp. 45–49, have argued for a date of c. 845. Since the first known criticism of Gottschalk's ideas, propounded at the court of Eberhard of Friuli, is a letter of his former abbot Hrabanus Maurus datable to 845/6, it is difficult to see how a miniature of the Moutier-Grandval Bible can be a specific response to Gottschalk, although this does not by any means rule out a connection with the issue of predestination, much discussed by Augustine and other Fathers.

⁶⁸ 'Visio Baronti', ed. by Levison, p. 386; Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 200.

⁶⁹ I owe this suggestion to Janet Nelson, after my lecture in York. I can not help thinking that if such an hypothesis is entertained, Hincmar might have appreciated the contrast between the high-born Ebo of the *Visio Baronti* text and his low-born Carolingian namesake.

revelled in slippery signifiers for their own sake, it is dangerous to see them as simply taking a particular party's line. However, that the illustrations engage the issue of purgation and predestination seems to me virtually inescapable. I may not have the right answer, but I do believe that it is one of the right questions.

There is another respect in which the illustrations of this manuscript may reflect not only the mid-ninth-century period when I believe them most likely to have been produced, but an aspect of the political discourse between royal and ecclesiastical court circles. The vicious civil war among the members of the Carolingian royal house reached its climax and nadir in 841, when bloody battle was joined at Fontenoy between the armies of Emperor Lothair and those of his younger brothers. Movingly narrated by Nithard,⁷⁰ the battle was also the subject of a wrenching poetic lament by an otherwise unknown poet Angilbert.⁷¹ Paul Edward Dutton's important recent study of the *Politics of Dreaming*, which concentrates on the new genre of dream- and vision-literature that arose at precisely this moment, gives considerable attention to Reims, where Ebo's successor Hincmar repeatedly used this new vision technique to express political views.⁷² It is worth noting that a mid-ninth-century manuscript of the probably Irish text of pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* ('On the twelve abuses of the world'), which makes a powerful link between the sinfulness or justice of the monarch and the fortunes of his kingdom, appears most likely to have been copied for an Archbishop of Reims.⁷³ I would like to suggest that the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript and its unique illustrations comprise the most dramatic visual counterpart

⁷⁰ For Nithard, see *Nithard: Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. by Philippe Lauer, *Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen age*, 7 (Paris, 1926), pp. 76–83, with the Latin text and French translation, and for an English version *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, trans. by Bernhard Walter Scholz (Ann Arbor, 1970), pp. 154–56.

⁷¹ See Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), pp. 48–51 (commentary) and pp. 262–65 (Latin text and English translation).

⁷² Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming*, pp. 113–56, the chapter 'Civil Wars and Worse'.

⁷³ The manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. lat. 973, discussed recently in Meens, 'Politics, Mirrors of Princes and the Bible', esp. p. 353 n. 40. The manuscript was copied, probably in or near Reims, from an exemplar written for Grimald of St Gall, arch-chancellor and archchaplain of Louis the German. It also contains the *ordo* for an episcopal consecration and a collection of capitularies. Since all of these issues were major interests of Hincmar, archchancellor of Charles the Bald, notably interested in and author of *ordines* and capitularies, it seems very likely if certainly not demonstrable that the manuscript was written for or written at the behest of Hincmar, which would be consistent with the likely date of the manuscript. For a luxuriously produced collection of capitularies from Reims almost certainly connected with Hincmar's patronage, and likely prepared as some manner of diplomatic gift, see Lawrence Nees, 'Unknown Carolingian Drawings of Hercules from the Scriptorium of Reims and the *Cathedra Petri* Ivories', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 46 (1988), 37–54.

to this visionary and didactic literature, and need to be seen in the context of the societal trauma of the bloody civil war in general and of the struggle for the see of Reims in particular. Indeed, there might conceivably be a more direct connection.

Dutton's recent study with Herbert Kessler of the poems and miniatures of the first Bible of Charles the Bald, datable to c. 845, argues among other things that Audradus Modicus, a canon of St Martin at Tours at the time, was responsible for writing the poems and working with an important painter on the design of the very unusual miniatures, not only the famous presentation image, but also the newly revised image serving as a frontispiece to John's Apocalypse, his *Revelation*.⁷⁴ Shortly afterwards, Audradus received an appointment as a suffragan bishop at Sens and composed a poem on the fountain of life addressed to Hincmar of Reims.⁷⁵ Shortly thereafter he became caught up in the Gottschalk controversy, soon thereafter losing his position as bishop through a council in which the heavy hand of Hincmar of Reims appears to have played the leading role. Audradus appealed, unsuccessfully, to the pope for redress through his strange *Liber revelationum*, dated 849, which included poems in praise of St Peter and St Martin of Tours.⁷⁶ It would be rash to claim that Audradus was in fact involved in the production of the St Petersburg manuscript, but he is certainly the kind of person whom we must imagine as having been involved, at least as a member of the audience for such a 'revelation' if not necessarily its primary patron. He might also be imagined as the kind of searcher through some west Frankish monastery's library (Tours? not far from Longoretus in Berry), who might have found an old text of the *Visio Baronti* and found it of interest. It is here particularly worth noting again that the text is introduced in ten of the manuscript witnesses, including the St Petersburg codex, not with the title *Visio*, but *Revelatio*.⁷⁷

The approach of the third millennium of the Christian era, difficult as it may be to date,⁷⁸ has elicited or at least accompanied a renewed interest in apocalyptic and visionary ideas of the medieval period, and in the texts in which they were expressed. The reissuance after a span of twenty years of Bernard McGinn's classic study is a symptom of the phenomenon, but his remarks also provide a broader context within which to see the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript. McGinn suggests that apocalypticism

⁷⁴ Dutton and Kessler, *Poetry and Paintings*, pp. 11–19 and 65–67.

⁷⁵ Audradus Modicus, *Liber de fonte vitae*, ed. by Ludwig Traube, MGH, Poet., 3 (Berlin, 1886), pp. 73–84.

⁷⁶ Audradus Modicus, *Liber revelationum*, ed. by Ludwig Traube, MGH, Poet., 3, pp. 84–88 and 740–45. For discussion see Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming*, pp. 128–56.

⁷⁷ 'Visio Baronti', ed. Levison, p. 397. On the title see also Carozzi, *Voyage*, pp. 144–45, with the argument that *Revelatio* was the title of the archetype, *Visio* being primarily a substitution of modern scholarship.

⁷⁸ Stephen Jay Gould, *Questioning the Millennium: A Rationalist's Guide to a Precisely Arbitrary Countdown* (New York, 1997), and *The End Is Near! Visions of Apocalypse, Millennium and Utopia*, ed. by Stephen Jay Gould and others (Baltimore, 1999).

commonly fused a variety of interests and was invoked with varying purposes, comprising a tool as well as a subject of intrinsic interest and value. His schematic separation of visions into two fundamental types, one focussing upon the fate of the individual soul, a genre culminating in Dante, and another focussing upon wider historical concerns and 'a view of the present as a moment of supreme crisis', seems of particular relevance to both the text and illustrations of the St Petersburg manuscript.⁷⁹ McGinn's rejection of the view that apocalypticism was a movement 'from below', arguing that was a learned 'scribal' phenomenon, employed by the 'well-educated and well-situated clerical intelligentsia—the court official, scribe or pamphleteer',⁸⁰ also fits very well the case here in view, a manuscript small enough to constitute a kind of pamphlet associated, as I venture to suggest, with a contemporary political and personal controversy.

Even if one finally sets aside the links between the figure of Audradus Modicus and the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript as speculative, mere coincidence, it happens that there is another intriguing strand connecting the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript, associated by provenance, text context, and style with Reims, with Tours. This connection is not textual but artistic. I mentioned that the *Visio Baronti* manuscript is the earliest surviving Christian imagery of a journey to the Underworld, but there are important classical forerunners. Chief among these is the famous Vatican Vergil, cod. lat. 3225 in the Biblioteca Apostolica (fig. 13). Produced in Rome in the early fifth century, in all likelihood, it was certainly in Tours during the ninth century. Not only were some lacunae there filled in with Touronian script, but David Wright has shown that the artists of the first Bible of Charles the Bald knew and drew upon the manuscript. The clearest example is offered by the figures of Aeneas and Achates standing before the Sibyl at the beginning of Aeneas's journey to the Underworld, who were adapted for the figures of two Roman soldiers behind St Paul in the scene of his preaching.⁸¹ In a more general way, the Touronian artists appear to have adapted such features as the frames of their miniatures from this venerable and evidently admired ancient source, the broad red band with inner bands of gold and silver used in the Vatican Vergil underlying the Tours conception.

Can it be merely a coincidence that a disproportionate number of the preserved illustrations of the Vatican Vergil deal with visits to the Underworld? One of the few surviving illustrations to the *Georgics* depicts the journey of Orpheus,⁸² and Book 6 of

⁷⁹ Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, rev. edn (New York, 1998), p. 15.

⁸⁰ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, pp. 5 and 32 respectively.

⁸¹ David Wright, *Der Vergilius Vaticanus: Ein Meisterwerk spätantiker Kunst* (Graz, 1993), pp. 108–09, and at greater length 'When the Vatican Vergil Was in Tours', in *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800–1250: Festschrift für Florentine Mütherich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by K. Bierbrauer, P. K. Klein, and W. Sauerländer (Munich, 1985). Also Herbert L. Kessler, 'An Apostle in Armor and the Mission of Carolingian Art', *Arte medievale*, 4 (1990), 17–41 (p. 26 and figs 13 and 14).

⁸² Fol. 9^r, illustrating *Georgics* 4. 467–84; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 19.

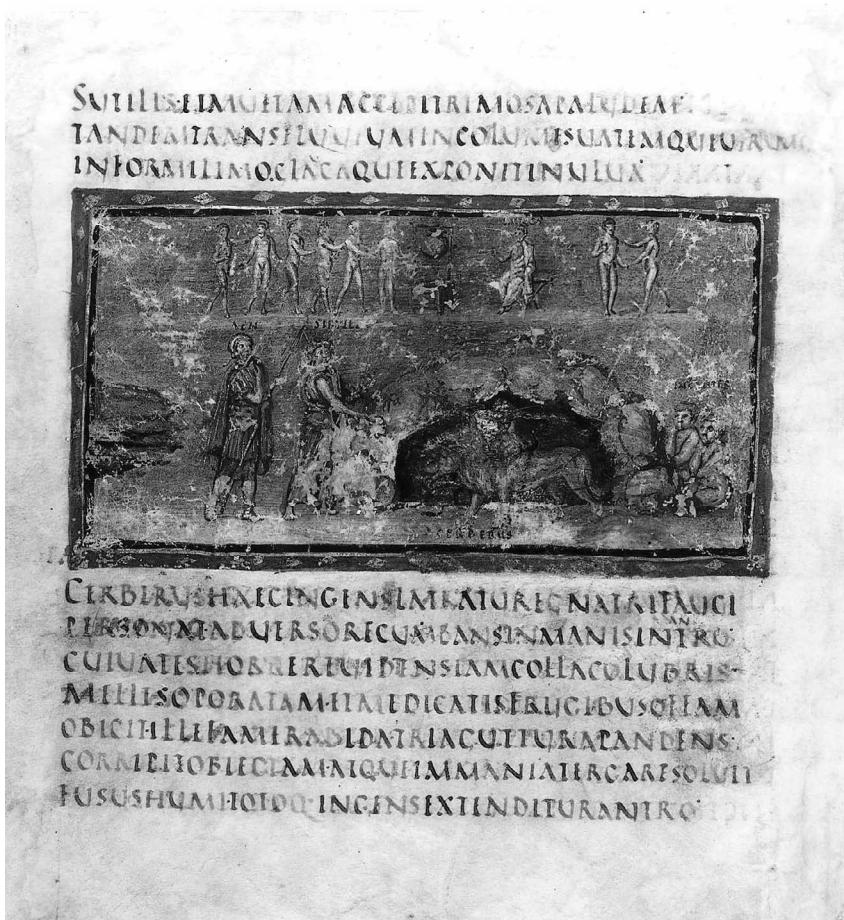


Fig. 13. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. lat. 3225, fol. 48^v,
Vatican Vergil, Aeneas and Sibyl before Cerberus; Minos judging spirits.

By kind permission of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

the *Aeneid*, wholly devoted to the Underworld journey, has more surviving illustrations than any other book of that epic in the Vatican manuscript. In total, eight of the forty surviving *Aeneid* illustrations (of an originally larger number, in an extraordinarily sumptuous and impressive book) illustrate Book 6, depicting the Underworld journey: Aeneas and Achates with the Sibyl before Apollo's temple (the image 'appropriated' by the Tournonian artists, as just noted),⁸³ Aeneas and the Sibyl offering sacrifice,⁸⁴ Aeneas

⁸³ Fol. 45^v, *Aeneid* 6. 45–46; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Fol. 46^v, *Aeneid* 6. 243–51; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 133.

and the Sibyl entering the Underworld,⁸⁵ the den of Cerberus and the Judgement of Souls by Minos (fig. 13),⁸⁶ Aeneas before Deiphobus,⁸⁷ the Vision of the Elysian Fields,⁸⁸ Aeneas and Anchises meeting and watching souls drinking from Lethe,⁸⁹ and finally Aeneas exiting through the gate of ivory, the gate through which false dreams enter the world, rather than the gate of horn, the gate of true dreams.⁹⁰ Is it too much to imagine that this passage would have been of special interest to Carolingian readers, at that moment so engaged with dreams and visions (the Vatican manuscript also contains two images of dreams⁹¹)? It is noteworthy that, like the Otherworld of the St Petersburg manuscript, that of the Vatican Vergil unfolds in registers, with complex compositions of small figures interspersed with larger figures, and is a place of tall towers and large arches. We even have the extraordinary evidence that a Carolingian artist chose to copy figures from within the Book 6 sequence of the Vatican Vergil, while later artists of the Renaissance, such as Marcantonio Raimondi (after Raphael) and Marco Dente, who also were inspired by the manuscript's illustrations, chose to follow images from Books 3 and 2 respectively.⁹²

I think it evident that the painter of the miniatures in the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript was familiar, if not necessarily with the Vatican Vergil manuscript and the painted Bible of Charles the Bald from Tours, both of which I consider very likely, then certainly with the artistic culture evident in those works. That artistic culture was largely a court culture, interested in exotic, interesting, and original ideas in a manner by no

⁸⁵ Fol. 47^r, *Aeneid* 6. 273–84; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 48.

⁸⁶ Fol. 48^v, *Aeneid* 6. 417–33; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 50.

⁸⁷ Fol. 49^r, *Aeneid* 6. 494–97; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 53.

⁸⁸ Fol. 52^r, *Aeneid* 6. 635–55; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 55.

⁸⁹ Fol. 53^v, *Aeneid* 6. 677–715; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 56.

⁹⁰ Fol. 57^r, *Aeneid* 6. 897–98; Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 59. For discussion of this critical and perplexing passage see E. J. Highbarger, *The Gates of Dreams: An Archaeological Examination of Vergil, Aeneid VI, 893–899* (Baltimore, 1940), and more recently a survey of the older literature, whose proposed solution to the puzzle I do not find very satisfying, in D. A. West, *The Bough and the Gate* (Exeter, 1987), reprinted in *Oxford Readings*, ed. by Harrison, pp. 224–38.

⁹¹ Fol. 19^v, *Aeneid* 2. 270–71, the shade of Hector appearing to the dreaming Aeneas (Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 127); fol. 28^r, *Aeneid* 3. 147–52, the *penates* appearing to the dreaming Aeneas (Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, p. 33).

⁹² For the two engravings of 1515 see Wright, *Vergilius Vaticanus*, pp. 110–11, with illustrations. For an important recent study of the prints of these artists and the related preliminary drawings by Raphael and subsequent copies see David Landau and Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550* (New Haven, 1994), pp. 123–42. See also on the relationship of prints from this series to specific antique sculptural sources Lawrence Nees, ‘Le “Quos Ego” de Marc-Antoine Raimondi: L’adaptation d’une source antique par Raphaël’, *Nouvelles de l’estampe*, 40/41 (1978), 18–29.

means limited to the Carolingian court circles. It is not simply a matter of recrudescence classicism, although that is surely an issue. The artistic style of active figures and red frames for miniatures characteristic of the Vatican Vergil was emulated not only in Tours but in manuscripts associated with Reims, such as the well-known Physiologus manuscript in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 318, which offers many interesting parallels to the Vatican Vergil manuscript.⁹³ The Physiologus painter was no slavish imitator, surely, as seen in a wonderful image of the horned Devil in a bathtub (fig. 14), which was, I am convinced, not derived from some lost prototype but invented by the painter, and very likely intended as a bit of a joke.⁹⁴ We may not get the joke, and lose the humour in trying to explain it, but surely we need to imagine particular individuals as artists, readers, viewers, and patrons. We happen to have been told by Vasari that Michelangelo painted the features of the papal functionary Biagio da Cesena on Minos undergoing torments in hell, or we would not be able to put a name to the arrestingly personal visage.⁹⁵ I am not seriously suggesting that we should recognize Hincmar's features on the bathing devil, but I should not be altogether surprised. We do after all have a pre-mortem epitaph for the widely unpopular archbishop.⁹⁶ Jan Ziolkowski's

⁹³ For example, not only the frames, but the landscape backgrounds and the handling of the figures in the landscape; compare for example the *Georgics* illustration from the Vatican manuscript, fol. 4^v (Wright, *Vatican Vergil*, p. 10) with the illustration of the stag in the Bern Physiologus, fol. 17^r (Otto Homburger, *Physiologus Bernensis* (Basel, 1964), pl. 25).

⁹⁴ Homburger, *Physiologus Bernensis*, p. 41: 'Dass das Reptil in diesem Bild in der Gestalt eines beharrten und gehörnten Satyrs mit buschigen Augenbrauen und struppigem Bart wieder-gegeben ist, kann nur als Übername aus einer Vorlage erklärt werden.' I would argue that although ostensibly illustrating the following text about the salamander, who extinguishes fire or makes hot bath water turn cold, this illustration is equally inspired by the lines of the preceding text which appear almost as its caption, and which describe not a salamander in a bath of water, but the devil overcome by the washing of baptism. A literate artist has conflated the episodes, portraying the devil in a cold bath.

⁹⁵ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. by Julia C. Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford, 1991), pp. 461–62. Part of the joke is no doubt that Biagio's name saint is also present in the painting, presenting the instrument of his martyrdom to Christ, but bears no resemblance to the papal 'master of ceremonies' either in features or future fate. For the image see Partridge, Mancinelli, and Colalucci, *Michelangelo, the Last Judgement*, pl. 92.

⁹⁶ Pre-mortem Epitaph of Hincmar: *Hoc iacet Hincmarus cleptes vehementer avarus: Hoc solum gessit nobile, quod perit*, attributed to John the Scot by Ludwig Traube in MGH, Poet., 3, p. 553. On the powerfully personal world of the Carolingian monastery see John Mitchell and Richard Hodges, 'Portraits, the Cult of Relics and the Affirmation of Hierarchy at an Early Medieval Monastery: San Vincenzo al Volturno', *Antiquity*, 70 (1996), 20–30, where a separate funerary crypt oratory for an important layperson, patron or donor presumably, has portraits of the donor, the abbot, and two deacons all interceding before images of Christ, the Virgin, or an archangel for individual souls. Elsewhere in the monastery there are portraits of two successive

arguments against a specific, neatly allegorical, interpretation of a fable in a St Gall manuscript of the later ninth century is certainly well taken, but surely need not be generalized so as to prohibit connections between Carolingian art and poetry with contemporary people and contexts.⁹⁷

The production of the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript also shows the mingling of important genres of illuminated manuscript production in the central Carolingian period. A series of wonderful clerical (not necessarily, as usually assumed, monastic) manuscripts like the Gellone Sacramentary and the Corbie Psalter show the fascinating and highly individual expression of the scribe/artists.⁹⁸ The manuscripts are small, in some senses rough and some might say crude in style, and very personal in production and audience. A very different series of de luxe manuscripts was produced in association with the royal courts of the same time, the period around the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century, such as the great Ada-group or 'Hofschule' books

abbots, Joshua and Talaricus (d. 817 and 824 respectively), presented facing the monastery's major relic, and also on axis with the monumental tombs of those very abbots, which flanked the main entrance to the church; see Hodges, Mitchell, and Watson, 'Abbot Talaricus' Tomb', pp. 453–56.

⁹⁷ Jan Ziolkowski, 'The Spirit of Play in the Poetry of St. Gall', in *Sangallensia in Washington: The Arts and Letters in Medieval and Baroque St. Gall, Viewed from the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. by James C. King (New York, 1993), pp. 143–69. Against earlier views that the poem *Aegrum fama fuit* in St Gall cod. 899 presents a bear instead of a more common wolf in related texts because it is meant to satirize some unknown courtier named ____-bero, Ziolkowski (pp. 148–51) finds widely scattered parallels that suggest no such specific compositional intent can be presumed. However, since a bear features prominently in the story and in contemporary pictorialization of its founding saint, it seems likely at least to me that a reader at the monastery of St Gall, where this version of the folk tale was composed and preserved, would take special pleasure in the appearance of a bear. In the same manner, although the *Tres iuvenes fratres* poem from St Gall appears already in an early-ninth-century manuscript, and may therefore have been composed and originally preserved without any possible reference to the quarrel among the sons of Louis the Pious (Ziolkowski, 'Spirit of Play', pp. 151–54), it seems to me unlikely that a later-ninth-century reader, or copyist, would not have seen a connection to Lothair, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald, although such a connection would by no means contradict the fundamentally playful tone and function of the poem.

⁹⁸ For the Gellone Sacramentary, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. lat. 12048, the most important study, devoted primarily to the text but also including the largest selection of illustrations, is *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis*, ed. by A. Dumas, CCSL, 159A (Turnholt, 1981). The Corbie Psalter, Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, cod. 18, is commonly referred to but still lacks a thorough study; for a convenient selection of illustrations see Braufels, *Welt der Karolinger*, pp. 64, 155, 156–58, and figs 68–83, pl. 23a–d.

Si in inferiora terrae perecutus es eum. Et effundens
de lateres suo sanguinem & aquam & effugavit
draconem pluviacum regenerationis & diaboli
opera amputavit.



GENITRANIMALIS QUIDIT SALAMAN
Hic si introierit in fornacem ignis
aut in balneo si introierit totus balneus frigidus effici-
tur. Ita erant corpora trium puerorum quos ignis
non lesit. sed magis aduersarios retulit quaeos infor-
nicos xpi suam virtute roborauit.



Fig. 14. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 318, fol. 17^v, Bern Physiologus, illustration of the Salamander in a bath. *By kind permission of the Burgerbibliothek, Bern.*

associated with Charlemagne, of which the Godescalc Evangelistary is the earliest.⁹⁹ These were more ambitious productions, works by highly trained professional scribe/illuminators, using expensive materials, but were also in some senses personal, produced as memorials or gifts in special circumstances. By the middle of the ninth century some well-known manuscripts combine features of the two series. The Prayerbook of Charles the Bald is perhaps the clearest example, elegant and professional in material and style, but small in scale and highly personal in its extraordinary decorative program, designed for the eyes of the King.¹⁰⁰ I would link the St Petersburg *Visio Baronti* manuscript with this roughly contemporary work as a unique and highly personal work, in this case associated with an episcopal rather than royal 'court', but similarly reflecting the intense and many-layered ideological and political struggles within which it came into being.

⁹⁹ Bruno Reudenbach, *Das Godescalc-Evangelistar: ein Buch für die Reformpolitik Karls des Grossen* (Frankfurt, 1998). For the standard collection and study of the group see Wilhelm Koehler, *Die Hofschule Karls des Grossen*, Die karolingischen Miniaturen, 2 (Berlin, 1958); the most recent discussion, with an extensive series of colour reproductions, is Florentine Mütherich, 'Die Erneuerung der Buchmalerei am Hof Karls des Grossen', in *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn*, ed. by Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz, 1999), III, 560–609.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Deshman, 'The Exalted Servant: The Ruler Theology of the Prayer-Book of Charles the Bald', *Viator*, 11 (1980), 385–417, and for a colour reproduction Horst Fuhrmann and Florentine Mütherich, *Das Evangeliar Heinrichs des Löwen und das mittelalterliche Herrscherbild* (Munich, 1986), no. 1, pls 1–2.

Carolingian Royal Palaces: The State of Research from an Architectural Historian's Viewpoint

UWE LOBBEDEY

Some fifty or eighty years ago, any discussion of this topic would have considered only the royal palaces of Aachen and Ingelheim. I am going to do almost the same thing now because our knowledge of Carolingian palaces, unfortunately, has only increased slightly since then, and a more critical look at the monuments in question, either excavated or still standing, means we know even less than we thought some years ago.¹ Our greatest problem is the near total ignorance of the architectural layouts of palaces in the western half of the Carolingian Empire.² Two sites, at Quierzy

¹ Recent publications: Walter Sage, 'Zur archäologischen Untersuchung karolingischer Pfalzen in Deutschland', in *Karl der Große, Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, ed. by Wolfgang Braunfels and Hermann Schnitzler, 3 vols (Düsseldorf, 1965), III, 323–35; Werner Jacobsen, 'Die Pfalzkonzeptionen Karls des Großen', in *Karl der Große als vielberufener Vorfahr*, ed. by L. E. Saurma-Jeltsch (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 23–48; Günther Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen von Karl dem Großen bis Friedrich II (765–1240)* (Darmstadt, 1996); Günther Binding, 'Die Aachener Pfalz Karls des Großen als archäologisch-baugeschichtliches Problem', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 26–27 (1997–98), 63–85. See the various contributions to volume III of *799 – Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn*, ed. by Christoph Stiegemann and Matthias Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz, 1999). From the above cited publications the access to the earlier bibliography is easy, so that it is not listed here. Cord Meckseper, 'Wurde in der mittelalterlichen Architektur zitiert? Das Beispiel der Pfalz Karls des Großen in Aachen', in *Braunschweiger Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft Jahrbuch 1998* (Braunschweig, 1999), pp. 65–85, was published after I had finished this article.

² *Palais médiévaux (France-Belgique): 25 ans d'archéologie*, ed. by Annie Renoux, Publications de l'Université du Maine (Le Mans, 1994). *Palais royaux et princières au moyen âge*, ed. by Annie Renoux, Publications de l'Université du Maine (Le Mans, 1996). Annie Renoux,

and Samoussy, situated about 90 km and 140 km north-west of Paris, were excavated in 1917 by Georg Weise and published as Carolingian palaces.³ The methods used at that time were not suitable for distinguishing between walls and traces of foundations dating from different periods. In the case of Quierzy it is even open to question whether Weise excavated the right site.⁴ However, recent excavation north-west of the abbey church of St Denis has resulted in the discovery of a possible royal palace.⁵ Therefore, in this article, I will concentrate—as my predecessors did—on Aachen and Ingelheim but will also consider briefly evidence from other sites.

Let us begin with Aachen.⁶ On a site near hot springs, where Roman baths and, later, a Frankish royal *villa* existed, Charlemagne decided to build a new palace. The date is mainly a matter of interpreting the sources: it ranges from the 780s to the beginning of the ninth century. One dendro-sample for the palatial church is indecisive,⁷ but it is generally accepted now that the church was completed about 796 or before. Three samples from the hall suggest a completion date of this building between 792 and 804.⁸

³ ‘Karolingische Pfalzen in Nordfrankreich’, in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 130–37.

⁴ Georg Weise, *Zwei fränkische Königspfalzen: Bericht über die an den Pfalzen zu Quierzy und Samoussy vorgenommenen Grabungen* (Tübingen, 1923).

⁵ Josianne Barbier, ‘Quierzy (Aisne): Résidence pippinide et palais carolingien’, in *Palais médiévaux (France-Belgique)*, ed. by Renoux, p. 85. The big oval fortifications are supposed to have been erected in the ninth or tenth centuries, but is it really impossible that they date from the eleventh or twelfth centuries?

⁶ Michael Wyss, ‘Saint-Denis’, in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 138–41.

⁷ Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen* and ‘Die Aachener Pfalz Karls des Großen’; Günter Binding, Bettina Jost, and Jochen Schröder, ‘Zur Ikonologie der Aachener Pfalzkapelle nach den Schriftquellen’, in *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft 750–1000: Festschrift Josef Semmler*, ed. by Dieter R. Bauer, Rudolf Hiestand, Brigitte Kasten, and Soenke Lorenz (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 187–211. Matthias Untermann, ‘“opere mirabili constructa”: Die Aachener Residenz Karls des Großen’, in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 152–64 (with extensive bibliography).

⁸ The interpretation of the dendro-date ‘776 +/-10’ as a *terminus ad quem*, i.e. not later than 786, put forward by Binding, ‘Die Aachener Pfalz Karls des Großen’, p. 77, and Untermann ‘“opere mirabili constructa”’, p. 158, is not quite correct. Hollstein’s date is meant as a *terminus post quem*; cf. Ernst Hollstein, *Mitteleuropäische Eichenchronologie*, Trierer Grabungen und Forschungen (Mainz, 1980), p. 45. A review by Matthias Exner of *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit* in *Kunstchronik*, 53 (2000), pp. 246–57 (pp. 249–50), reports that according to a new test from the dendro-laboratory at Trier the tree rings can not be synchronized and therefore can not be used in support of a date for the palace chapel at Aachen.

⁹ Hollstein, *Mitteleuropäische Eichenchronologie*, p. 44.

We know from written sources that building activities continued into the time of Louis the Pious. The plan of the whole complex is precisely orientated (fig. 15). As far as we know it consists of four parts: in the north the great hall (oriented east-west) and, as its counterpart, 120 m to the south the palace church complex. A double-storeyed passage-way connected these two main parts at their western ends. This passage was interrupted in the middle by a fairly large two-storey building oriented east-west. The famous central church, which I shall not describe in detail, is provided with a rectangular atrium in the west. Two major annex buildings, each of them two-storeyed, extend to the north and south of the church; the one to the north has three aisles. The purpose of these buildings is uncertain, possibly one of them, or both, served as the *secretarium*, housing the treasure of the church and the liturgical equipment, and was used for assemblies. One might have been the so-called *domus episcopi*, the residence of the 'archchancellor'.

While the church itself is well preserved and fairly well known in its archaeological details, the available documentation on all the other buildings just mentioned is very unsatisfying. The great hall was converted into a gothic town hall in the fourteenth century, altered again in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and rebuilt in neogothic style between 1840 and 1901. Very little Carolingian masonry is left (fig. 16). Small excavations, especially in the 1960s,⁹ and very limited research on the walls gave important information but left many questions unanswered. For the other buildings we depend on excavation reports of the nineteenth century, old photographs, and very scanty remains of masonry still accessible. No modern critical study of the whole surviving material exists. The chronology of different parts of the buildings, which were obviously built in different phases, has not yet been established. Under these circumstances the reconstruction of the shape and the interpretation of the function of the buildings have to be treated with great caution.¹⁰

Starting with the great hall in the north, we are confronted with a building of rectangular plan. The inner dimensions are 17.20 x 44 m. The west wall opened onto a very wide apse which was raised up by three steps. Two other apses are attached to the middle of the north and south walls. A square tower, called the 'Granusturm', is joined to the east side of the hall. It contained a staircase and small vaulted rooms. The height of the hall building has been reconstructed measuring 20.70 m, but this remains debatable. The corners of the building were surrounded by pilasters, and the remains of two pilasters were discovered on the side walls, one on either side of the apse (1.50 m broad, 0.18 m thick). This led to a reconstruction of blind arches according to the

⁹ Walter Sage, 'Stadt kerngrabungen in Aachen 1962–64', in *Aquae Granni: Beiträge zur Archäologie von Aachen* (Köln, 1982), pp. 77–100.

¹⁰ Binding, 'Die Aachener Pfalz Karls des Großen', and Untermann "opere mirabili constructa", point to the fact that no comprehensive critical study of the very scattered archaeological material exists. Moreover, the known reconstructions of the hall and the passage must be reviewed more critically than these authors do.

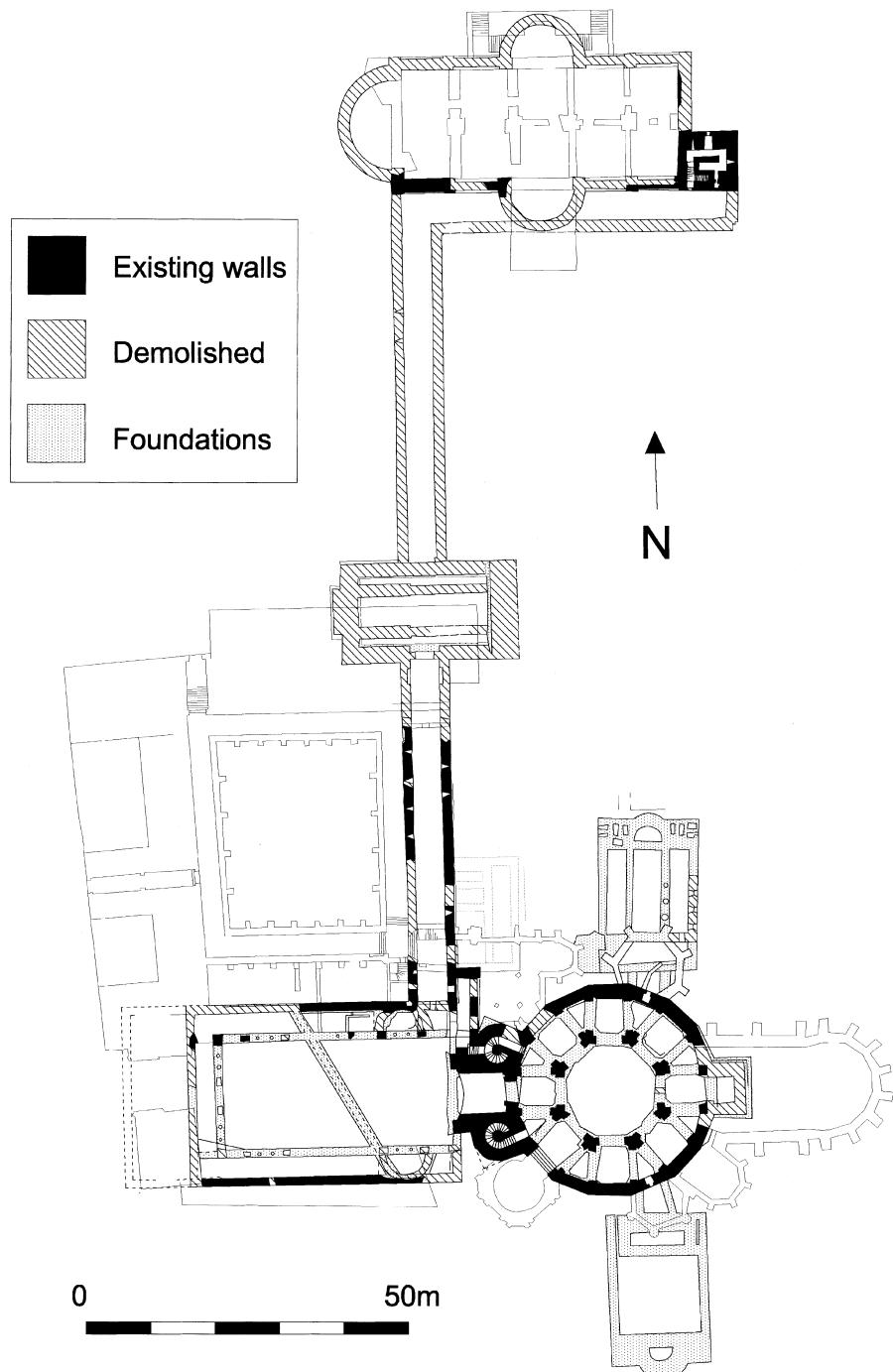


Fig. 15. Aachen, overall plan of the palace (after Kreusch, 'Kirche, Atrium und Portikus der Aachener Pfalz', in *Karl der Große*, ed. by Braunfels and Schnitzler, fig. 1).

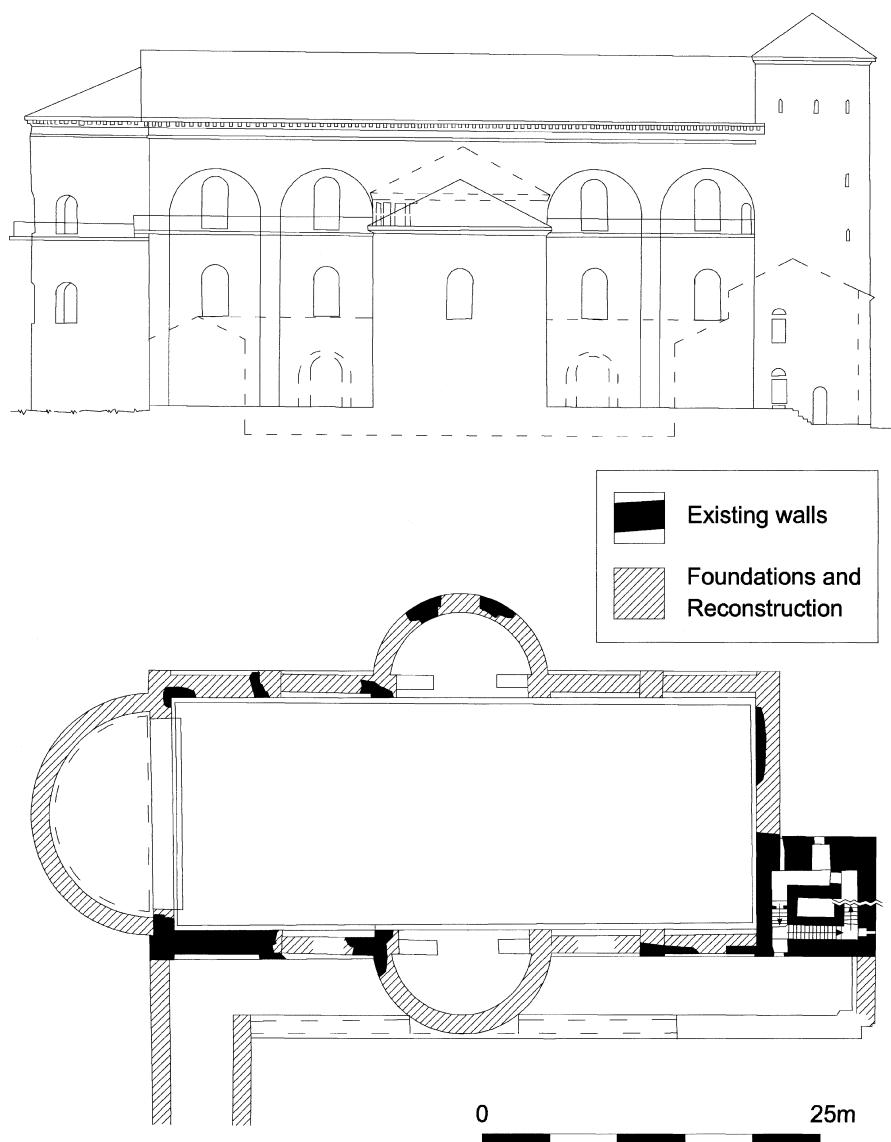


Fig. 16. Aachen, hall, ground plan and reconstruction of the elevation (after Hugot, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen in Aachen', in *Karl der Große*, ed. by Braunfels and Schnitzler, figs 3 and 5).

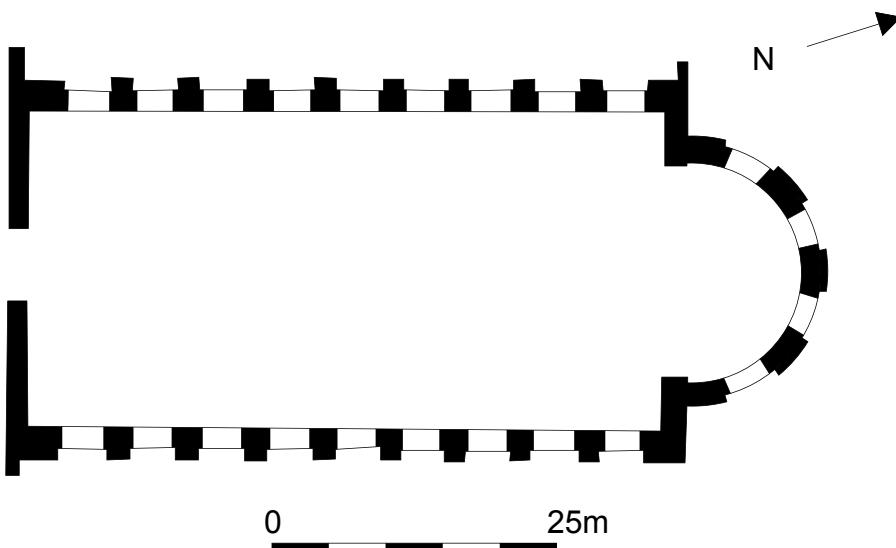


Fig. 17. Trier, Constantinian palace hall (after Jacobsen, 'Die Pfalzkonzeptionen Karls des Großen', p. 31).

example of the palatine hall at Trier (fig. 17). Two rows of windows and a gallery were also reconstructed according to the same model. There is no evidence to show whether the hall was two-storeyed or not, and whether the apses were vaulted. Generally the assumption of a single-storeyed hall is accepted. Unfortunately we do not know where the one or more entrances were. The reconstruction drawing indicates entrances on either side of the southern apse, but without any basis in the evidence.

In front of the south side was a *porticus* 6.21 m wide. Its lower part served as a terrace above the courtyard which drops to the south. On the main level it forms a continuation at right angles of the long gallery which runs south to the church. The shape of the crossing point of the apse and the *porticus* and its function remain unsolved problems. This place is now occupied by a neo-gothic tower. The long gallery between hall and church has two storeys: the upper one which leads to the upper storey of the atrium and church, and the lower one which was vaulted and served mainly as a substructure to the upper. The building in the middle of this gallery with its considerable dimensions of c. 15 x 30 m must have been two-storeyed too with a vaulted lower storey. This is generally thought to have been an entrance building to the courtyard east of it. But the upper edge of the excavated wall in the axis of the building is too high to support this interpretation. Recently it has been suggested that the upper storey of the

building served as the living quarters of the Emperor.¹¹ We learn from writings of Einhard¹² and Notker Balbulus¹³ that Charlemagne was able to look down from his rooms to the courtyard and to see whatever happened there. If this idea is right, the problem of the location of the Emperor's living quarters would be solved, but sites of the quarters of the women of the royal household, of the buildings for distinguished guests and for officials, of the kitchens, stables, and so on are still unknown. Very probably the area at the east side of the courtyard was occupied by buildings for these purposes. The only evidence for buildings there is a door in the 'Granusturm' of the hall leading to an upper storey of a building south of this tower.

Charlemagne's palace at Aachen has no parallels north of the Alps in terms of the regularity of the layout, the dimensions of the buildings, and the quality of the architecture (to judge by the extant church). What were his models? For the hall, the example of the Constantinian hall in Trier, begun c. AD 305, has often been quoted. But this comparison leads to the danger of circular reasoning, for some aspects of the Aachen hall were reconstructed on the basis of that at Trier. Nevertheless this comparison can not be altogether wrong in so far as the hall of Trier belongs to a fairly common type of late antique apsidal palace halls (Piazza Armerina, Spalato, Ravenna). In Aachen, the type of the simple great apsed hall has been mixed with another type, the equally common type of the three-apsidal banqueting hall called *triclinium* (Piazza Armerina, Ravenna).¹⁴ At about the same time, Pope Leo III built a reception and banqueting hall with three apses at the Lateran palace, the *triclinium*, which was decorated with the famous mosaic of St Peter, the Pope, and Charlemagne (fig. 18). Leo III was elected in 795; the mosaic representing Charlemagne as king must have been executed before the imperial coronation of AD 800. Was Leo's *triclinium* the model for Aachen?¹⁵ The consequence of this hypothesis is that the three-apsidal hall at Aachen must have been preceded by a slightly earlier building, which served as a main hall and that the layout

¹¹ Cord Meckseper, 'Das "Tor- und Gerichtsgebäude" der Pfalz Karls des Großen in Aachen', in *Architektur und Kunst im Abendland: Festschrift zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres von Günter Urban*, ed. by Michael Jansen and Klaus Winands (Rome, 1992), pp. 105–13.

¹² Einhard, *Translatio SS Marcellini et Petri*, II. 1, ed. by G. Waitz, MGH, SS, 15.1 (Hannover, 1887), p. 245: 'ad quam fenestram, de qua in inferiora palatii prospectus erat'.

¹³ Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, I. 30, ed. by H. Haefele, MGH, SRG, n.s., 12 (Berlin, 1962), p. 41: 'ut ipse per cancellos solarii sui cuncta posset videre'.

¹⁴ Irving Lavin, 'The House of the Lord: Aspects of the Role of Palace *Triclinia* in the Architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', *Art Bulletin*, 44 (1962), 1–27; Manfred Luchterhandt, 'Päpstlicher Palastbau und höfisches Zeremoniell unter Leo III', in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 109–22.

¹⁵ Cf. Warren Sanderson, 'The Sources and Significance of the Ottonian Church at Panteleon at Cologne', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 29 (1970), 93–94, and Jacobsen, 'Die Pfalzkonzeptionen Karls des Großen', pp. 44–45. The dendro-date (cf. n. 8) would allow the erection of the hall immediately after 800.

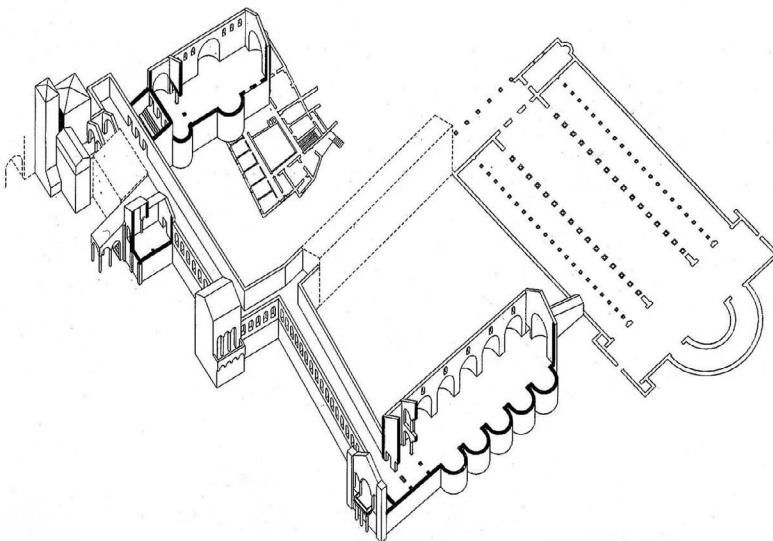


Fig. 18. Rome, Lateran palace, isometric partial reconstruction of the main area. The buildings of Leo III: above left, the *Triclinium*, below right, the 'Council hall' (a later name). (From Lucherhand, 'Päpstlicher Palastbau', p. 113.)

of the whole, as we know it, is not the result of a single plan but developed over a long period. To avoid these not very welcome consequences, a common model for Aachen and Rome must be investigated.¹⁶

Moreover, another problem arises from the comparison of Aachen with the Lateran *triclinium* and its late antique predecessors: they all have their entrance opposite the main apse in the narrow end. The plan at Aachen does not suggest a main entrance in the east side, where the tower would block any procession which came from the south-east. Therefore, entrances on either side of the southern apse accessible from the *porticus* have been proposed. But if this is so, then the antique role of the great western apse as the endpoint of processions would have been severely neglected. In the absence of any archaeological evidence at Aachen, the problem is insoluble.

There is another point of comparison between the Lateran and Aachen: the long double-storeyed gallery formed an important part of both palaces. In Aachen the gallery

¹⁶ In the view of Lucherhandt, 'Päpstlicher Palastbau', Leo's *triclinium* is closer to its late antique predecessors, while the measurements of the Aachen hall do not fit with late antique customs: 'Der Bautyp wird zu einem monumentalen Zitat, mit dem die neue Dynastie der Karolinger an die spätantike Hofkultur anknüpft' (p. 121).

formed a type of architectural axis or spine for the design of the whole, while at the Lateran it was a more casual combination of connecting galleries between different buildings of the palace.¹⁷ The latter can be explained by the fact that the Lateran had a long and complicated building history. When the *Moissac Chronicle* in 796 stated that Charlemagne at Aachen *fecit autem ibi palatum, quod nominavit Lateranis*,¹⁸ it is obvious that the Lateran was not an exact model for the architectural layout of Aachen; rather it was a model in the figurative sense.

The model for the church remains to be considered. After lengthy discussions, art historians now agree that San Vitale at Ravenna, erected in 540–47, was the architectural model for the plan of the church in Aachen.¹⁹ But the character of the church at Aachen, an extraordinary building, can only be understood in the light of the recent conclusion that it was simultaneously a palace chapel and a minster for the canons right from the beginning.²⁰ It was the church of the imperial residence. In this respect, its model was the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.²¹ The predecessor of Justinian's great domed church was founded both as a palace church and the main church of the capital city by Constantine. Only this model can explain the splendour of Charlemagne's church at Aachen. The service of the court clergy, of the chaplains, would never require such a huge church, as other palaces show. The Lombard duke, Arechis II, had already in c. 760 founded the church of St Sofia at Benevento, modelled on the church at Constantinople of the same name, although its architectural shape was very different.²² The example of Arechis II may explain to us why Charlemagne planned and built his church and palace long before the idea of his coronation as emperor had become an actuality.

Unfortunately we do not know much more about the palace of the emperors of Constantinople other than the area where it was situated and that it was a conglomeration of different buildings of different periods.²³ Most of our information comes from written

¹⁷ According to Luchterhand, 'Päpstlicher Palastbau', pp. 113–16, the eastern part of the *porticus* with its adjacent rooms is part of the palace of the sixth to seventh centuries, while Leo built the gallery of 170 m to the west as a processional way to the new banqueting hall, the later *sala dei concili* (p. 116).

¹⁸ *Chronicon Moissaciense*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH, SS, 1 (Berlin, 1828), p. 303.

¹⁹ Matthias Untermann, *Der Zentralbau im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1989), p. 105. Untermann 'opere mirabili constructa', pp. 158–59.

²⁰ Ludwig Falkenstein, *Karl der Große und die Entstehung des Aachener Marienstiftes*, Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte, n.f., 3 (Paderborn, 1981). Josef Fleckenstein, 'Über das Aachener Marienstift als Pfalzkapelle Karls des Großen', in *Festschrift für Berent Schwincköper*, ed. by Helmut Maurer and Hans Patze (Sigmaringen, 1982), pp. 19–28.

²¹ Untermann, *Der Zentralbau im Mittelalter*, p. 106. Untermann 'opere mirabili constructa', pp. 158–59.

²² Untermann, *Der Zentralbau im Mittelalter*, pp. 110–12.

²³ Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls* (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 229–335. Herbert Hunger, 'Der Kaiserpalast zu Konstantinopel: Seine Funktionen in der

sources the aim of which was not to inform us about the architectural appearance. But the texts mention an elevated gallery between the palace and the church, 300 m long.²⁴ It is not unlikely that the common model for Leo's *triclinium* at Rome and Charlemagne's three-apsidal hall was a building in the Great Palace in Constantinople. A *triconchos* with three apses certainly existed there, though possibly not before the ninth century.²⁵ Richard Krautheimer convincingly proposed that another building of Leo III at the Lateran, a banqueting hall in the west part of the palace area which later served as a *sala dei concili* and in the ninth century was called *triclinium* or *accubitum*, had a special model in a banqueting hall in the Great Palace, which we know only from written sources.²⁶ Another example of this type of hall was excavated in the Lausos Palace, a sixth-century building not far from the Great Palace.²⁷

Neither the palace of Aachen nor that at Ingelheim was fortified. Christian Rauch's reconstruction of the palace in Ingelheim, drawn after his excavations in 1909–14, became very popular and was used as an illustration in many textbooks.²⁸ Quite a contrast to this reconstruction is the reduced plan which Walter Sage published some years after excavations started again in 1960 on a very limited scale (figs 19a and 19b).²⁹ These excavations were resumed in 1995.³⁰ No historical records tell us anything about the time of the construction of the Carolingian palace. Charlemagne celebrated Christmas 787 and Easter 788 at Ingelheim. In June 788 a great assembly took place there. In the records the place was called a *villa*. It is very probable that prestigious buildings existed at that time. Einhard, in his biography, mentioned Ingelheim as the first among three outstanding palaces which he built—the other two are Aachen and

byzantinischen Außen- und Innenpolitik', *JÖB*, 36 (1986), 1–11. Eugenia Bolognesi Recchi Franceschini, 'Der byzantinische Kaiserpalast im 8. Jahrhundert', in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 123–29.

²⁴ Beat Brenk, 'Innovation im Residenzbau der Spätantike', in *Innovation in der Spätantike*, ed. by Beat Brenk, Spätantike – Frühes Christentum – Byzanz: Studien und Perspektiven, 1 (Wiesbaden, 1996), p. 89. Cf. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, p. 230.

²⁵ Richard Krautheimer, 'Die Dekanneakkubita in Konstantinopel – Ein kleiner Beitrag zur Frage Rom und Byzanz', in his *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur europäischen Kunstgeschichte* (Cologne, 1988), p. 138, n. 28.

²⁶ Krautheimer, 'Die Dekanneakkubita', pp. 136–38. Cf. Luchterhandt, 'Päpstlicher Palastbau'.

²⁷ Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, p. 238.

²⁸ Christian Rauch, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen zu Ingelheim am Rhein', in *Neue deutsche Ausgrabungen*, ed. by G. Rodenwaldt (Münster, 1930), pp. 266–77.

²⁹ Walter Sage, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der Pfalz zu Ingelheim am Rhein 1960–1970', *Francia*, 4 (1976), 141–60 (fig. 1, p. 147).

³⁰ Holger Grewe, 'Die Königspfalz zu Ingelheim am Rhein', in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 142–51.

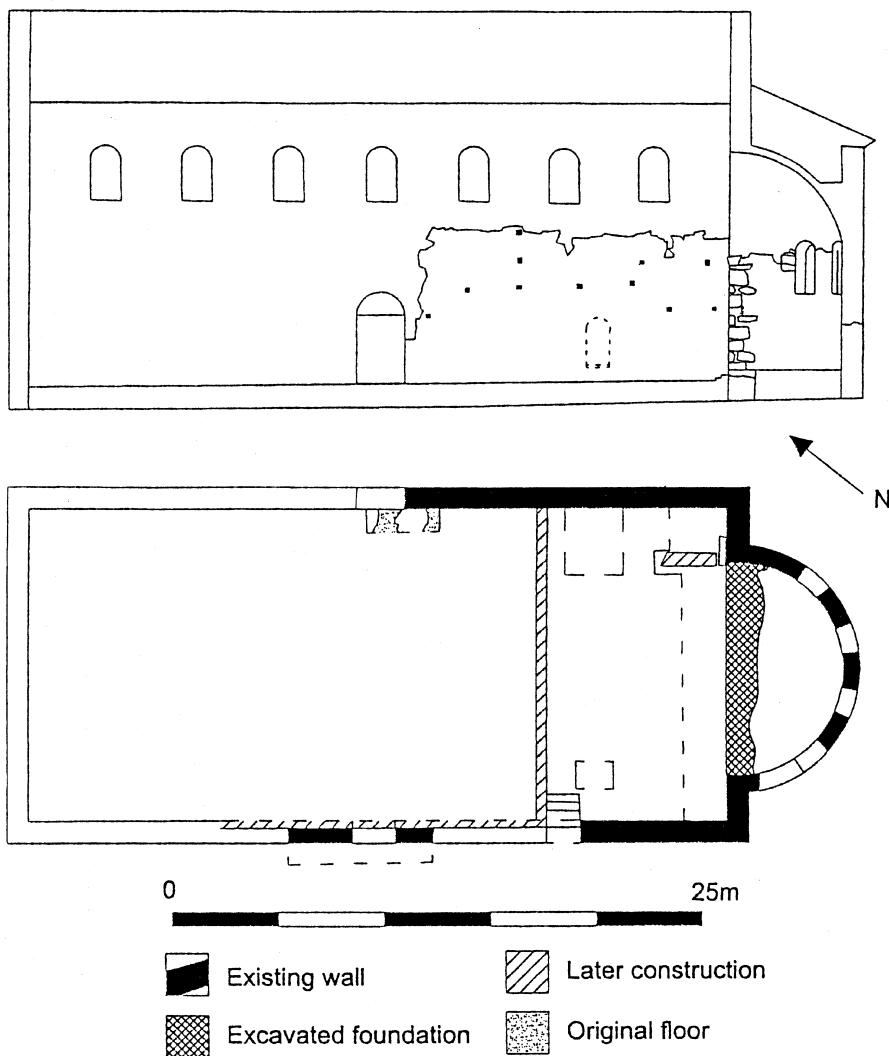


Fig. 19a. Ingelheim, overall plan of the palace area
 (after Sage, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der Pfalz zu Ingelheim
 am Rhein 1960–1970', p. 147).

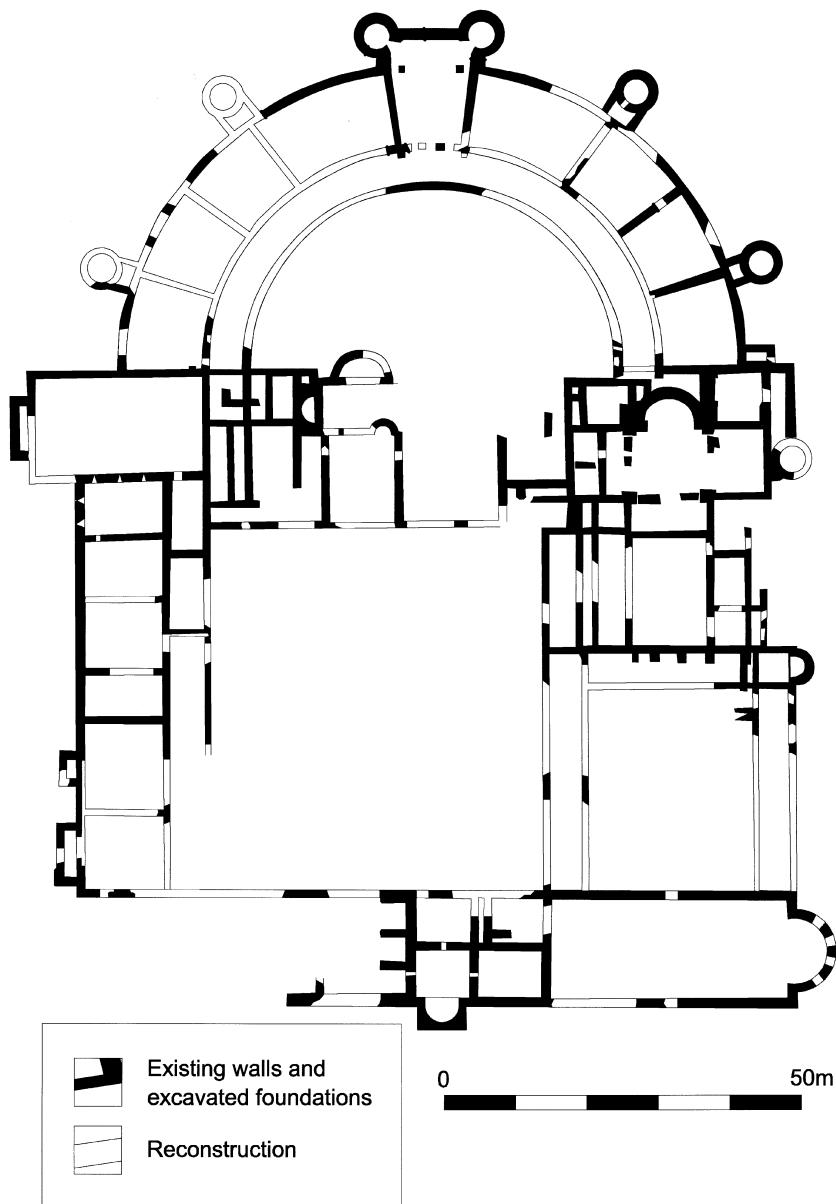


Fig. 19b. Ingelheim, overall plan of the palace area with the reconstruction of the building alignments (after Jacobsen, 'Die Pfalzkonzeptionen Karls des Großen', p. 28).

Nijmegen. Louis the Pious stayed at least ten times at Ingelheim. Ermoldus Nigellus's praise poem to Emperor Louis gives a description of paintings in the hall and in the church of Ingelheim.³¹ But it is still debated whether these descriptions referred to real paintings or not.³²

In the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh, the palace at Ingelheim was very frequently visited and many important assemblies were held there. From the twelfth century onwards, the site became a fortified castle. The surviving parts of it are late gothic in appearance. Today the site of the former palace is part of a small town. Excavations since those of Christian Rauch have had to be limited to fairly moderate extensions between the existing houses. There are two large buildings still standing which go back to the time of the palace. One is the ruin of a large hall, the other one is a church still in use, with traces of different phases of rebuilding. The church, which Christian Rauch reconstructed as a basilica with transept and apse and interpreted as the palace chapel, after more recent excavations by Walter Sage turned out to be in its oldest nucleus a single-naved cruciform church which is not older than the tenth century and had no Carolingian predecessor on this site. It must therefore be removed from the plan of the Carolingian palace.

In the large hall, the lower part of an apse is still standing on the short side to the south of the building (fig. 20). It had four windows, with no window in the middle of the apse. Parts of the side walls are preserved, and presumably the corner of the other short side to the north. The inner dimensions are 14.50 x 33 m, that is, about three quarters of the size of Aachen (17.20 x 44 m). In the middle of each long wall, there was an entrance door to the hall (2.10 m wide). In 1888 three arches were found in the axis of the building to the north which were subsequently demolished. They clearly belonged to a grand main entrance to a forecourt or narthex in front of the hall. Christian Rauch reconstructed the hall with a basilical section. This was disproved by recent excavations which confirmed the Carolingian origins of the hall generally but have currently provided no exact date.

Christian Rauch did not use stratigraphic methods in his excavations. It is therefore doubtful in many cases whether the foundations he detected are of Carolingian or later date. However, the large semicircle with a diameter of 89 m which closed off the whole complex to the east is generally accepted as dating from the time of Charlemagne. A medieval gate, possibly containing the remains of a Carolingian building, lies in the middle of this. The inner circle of the semi-circle surrounded a colonnaded *porticus* (fig. 19b). Outside the outer wall of the semicircle, two round towers were excavated. A covered narrow drain connects these towers and runs through them. The range of

³¹ Walter Lammers, 'Ein karolingisches Bildprogramm in der Aula Regia von Ingelheim', in his *Vestigia Mediaevalia: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur mittelalterlichen Historiographie, Landes- und Kirchengeschichte*, Frankfurter Historische Abhandlungen, 19 (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 219–83.

³² Cf., e.g., Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, p. 102.

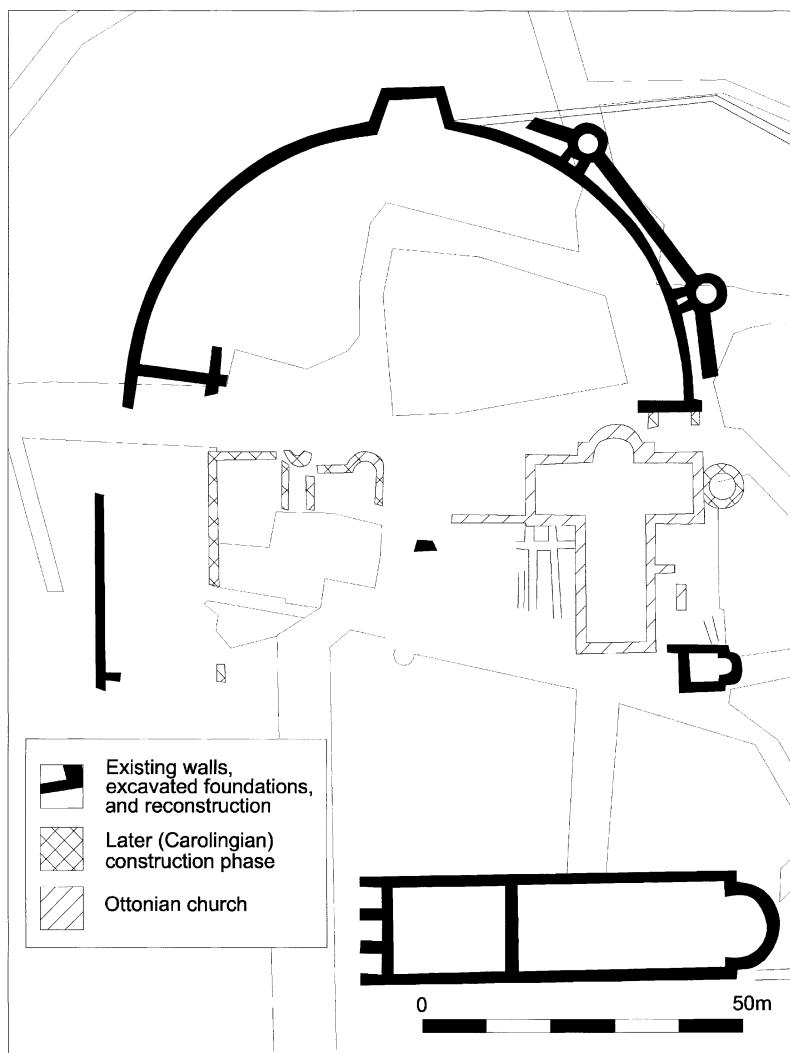


Fig. 20. Ingelheim, hall, findings, and reconstruction of the elevation (after Sage, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der Pfalz zu Ingelheim am Rhein 1960–1970', p. 151).

interpretations of these findings is very wide. The towers have been interpreted as fortification towers, which is certainly wrong. More recently it has been argued, because of the presence of a water channel, that the towers served as latrines. This would be difficult to imagine if the main entrance to the palace were in the axis of the semicircle (which has been the general assumption since Rauch). Indeed the main direction from

which the palace was reached was from the city of Mainz, that is, from the east. But the Roman road ran north of the palace area and so we should take into account the possibility that the main entrance was on the north or even on the west side.

The reconstruction plans of Ingelheim usually suggest that the hall formed the western end of the palace area. This is by no means certain, as the entrance in the western longitudinal side, which is mentioned above, must have led to a courtyard and presumably to other buildings.³³ Unfortunately there is no chance for archaeological excavations west of the hall because of the great disturbance in the ground since the twelfth-century fortifications. So at the present time we should admit that we understand very little of the whole layout of the palace. This is especially the case with regard to the site of the palace chapel, which is not explicitly mentioned in the Carolingian records apart from in the poem of Ermoldus Nigellus. No site has been detected where a Carolingian palatine chapel could be located, and so it was proposed that the church of St Remigius, now a parish church about 600 m west of the palace and already mentioned in the records 742–43, was used as the chapel. But the evidence of the large-scale and generous design of the whole, the use of important Roman *spolia* like capitals, columns, and bases, elaborate pieces of Carolingian architectural sculpture, and the wide western *exedra* indicate that the palace at Ingelheim should be ranked next to that of Aachen, although on a slightly smaller scale. Antique models for the *exedra* can easily be found.

This brings us to the question of whether this kind of layout was typical for Carolingian palaces. Perhaps the palace at Nijmegen,³⁴ which is mentioned by Einhard together with Aachen and Ingelheim, was of similar ambitious design. But unfortunately we know nothing of it. I tend to think that these two or three palaces were exceptions and that the other known Carolingian palaces, together with their predecessors and successors, were built according to less developed plans and in a less classicizing manner.

Paderborn became a place of strategic importance during Charlemagne's wars with the Saxons.³⁵ In 776 a large castle was erected and in the following year an important assembly was held there when the *Royal Frankish Annals* mention that a church dedicated to the Saviour was built. In 778, Paderborn was conquered by the Saxons and destroyed, only to be rebuilt in the following year. Several assemblies took place there and in its immediate vicinity in the last quarter of the eighth century. It was in 799 the place of Charlemagne's famous meeting with Pope Leo III and this is probably when the bishopric of Paderborn was founded. An *ecclesia mirae magnitudinis* is mentioned. The eleventh century forms a second centre of gravity in the history of Paderborn, when the episcopal see of Paderborn became an important base of the Ottonian 'Reichskirche'.

³³ Recently Grewe, 'Die Königspfalz zu Ingelheim am Rhein', pp. 148–49, points to the fact that no traces of buildings were found north of the hall. If the conventional reconstruction is right, the court must have been closed there.

³⁴ Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, pp. 115–16.

³⁵ Cf. different contributions to volume III of *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff.

From 1964–70 large-scale excavations took place in the palace area, which brought to light the foundations of many buildings of the eighth to the eleventh century. The analysis of the findings is extremely difficult and still going on.³⁶ The palace is situated in the northern part of a fortified area of 280 x 250–300 m. Its buildings stood on a slope, which inclined to the north and at the base of which the springs of the river Pader rose (fig. 21). Buildings which can be attributed to the first phase of 776–77 are a great hall of 31 x 10 m and a church with a single nave of about the same size. They lie one behind the other, but not on the same axis. Many wooden buildings may have surrounded this nucleus. The church, to which belonged a fairly large cemetery, simultaneously served the palace and the military garrison and acted as a missionary and parish church for the people living in the surrounding area. The hall had a lower storey of modest height, which could only serve for secondary purposes, and an elevated main storey. The entrances were on the south side, one to the lower storey in the middle, another to the main storey near the east end of the hall. Later on, another entrance to the main storey was created near the west end.

The next step in the development of the palace area is archaeologically marked by the erection of a large basilica south of the first church (fig. 22). The inner dimensions of the three-aisled nave are 21 x 42.70 m. It has no transept. The eastern end was presumably formed by three apses. This church must be identified with the *ecclesia mirae magnitudinis* of 799. There is no evidence of major alterations of the hall building at that time. A building which was added on the north side possibly served as living quarters of the royal family. East of it a building seems to have served for economic purposes. The area north of the church possibly was dedicated to the clergy. This was concluded from the fact that some traces of walls form right angles to the axis of the church.

Other building activities must be dated to the ninth century. A western transept of the church, which at that time had clearly the function of a cathedral church, is datable to the years around 836 when the hall was at least partly rebuilt (fig. 23). The reconstruction of this building using the foundations remains open for discussion. The west end was enlarged to the west and the south. Whether a foundation parallel to the older south wall of the hall belongs to a gallery or to a new south wall is not clear. Building activities continued up to the end of the tenth century. In the year 1000, a fire destroyed the whole city including the church and the palace. It was Bishop Meinwerk (1009–36) who rebuilt the cathedral, largely reusing the foundations of its Carolingian predecessor. He built a new palace of considerably larger dimensions north of the old one. The Carolingian palace of Paderborn never achieved either in its earlier or later building phases the regularity of plan seen at Aachen or Ingelheim. The arrangement of the buildings followed the shape of the natural slope according to a simple, old tradition. Furthermore, the elaborate systems of Aachen and Ingelheim obviously did not determine the later development of palace building: Ottonian palaces like Werla and Tilleda have single buildings scattered in a large enclosure.³⁷

³⁶ See, above all, Sueva Gai, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen in Paderborn', in *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, ed. by Stiegemann and Wemhoff, III, 183–96.

³⁷ Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, pp. 168–90.

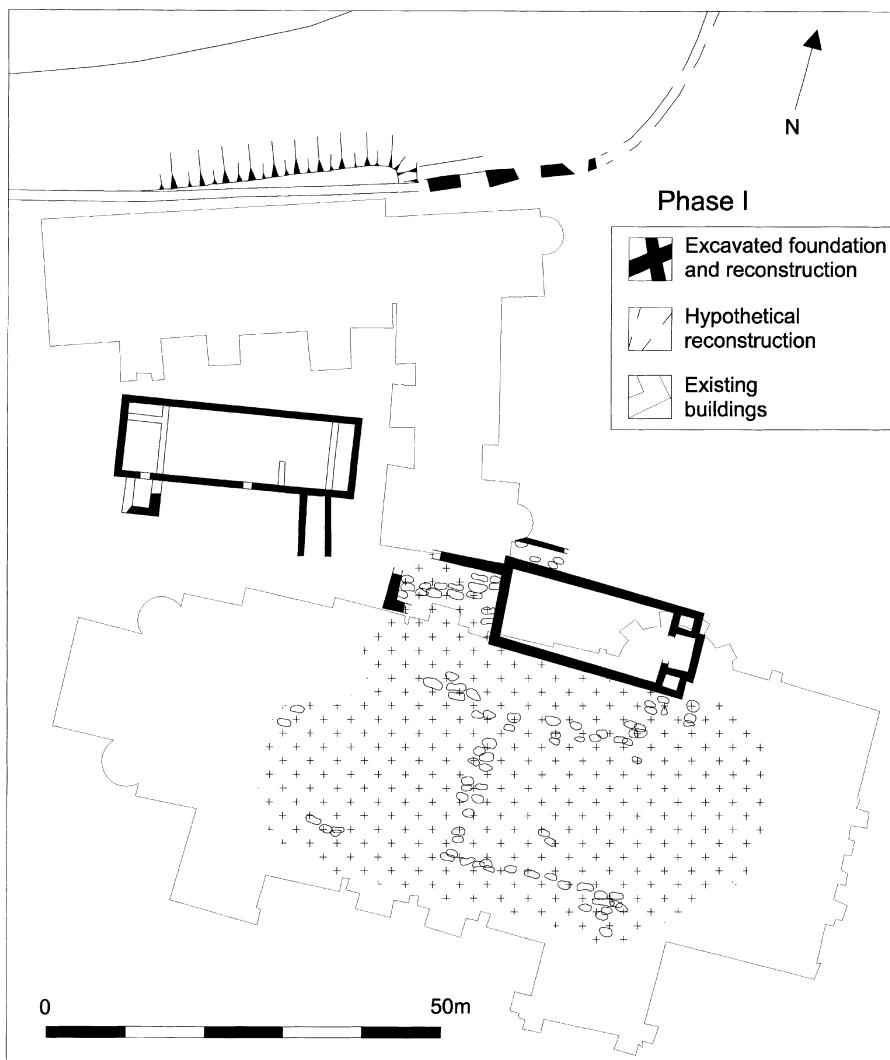


Fig. 21. Paderborn, Phase 1 palace buildings (after Gai, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen in Paderborn', fig. 1). Paderborn, Kaiserpfalz, Museum.

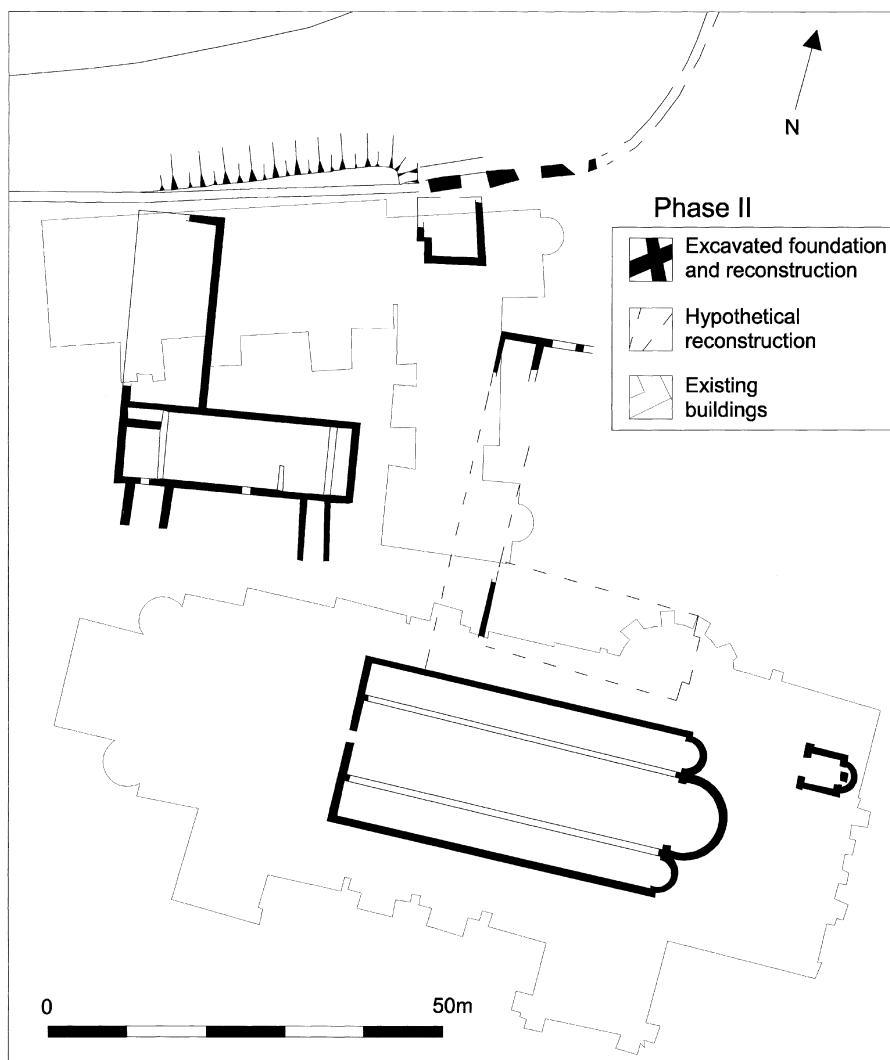


Fig. 22. Paderborn, Phase 2 palace buildings (after Gai, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen in Paderborn', fig. 6). Paderborn, Kaiserpfalz, Museum.

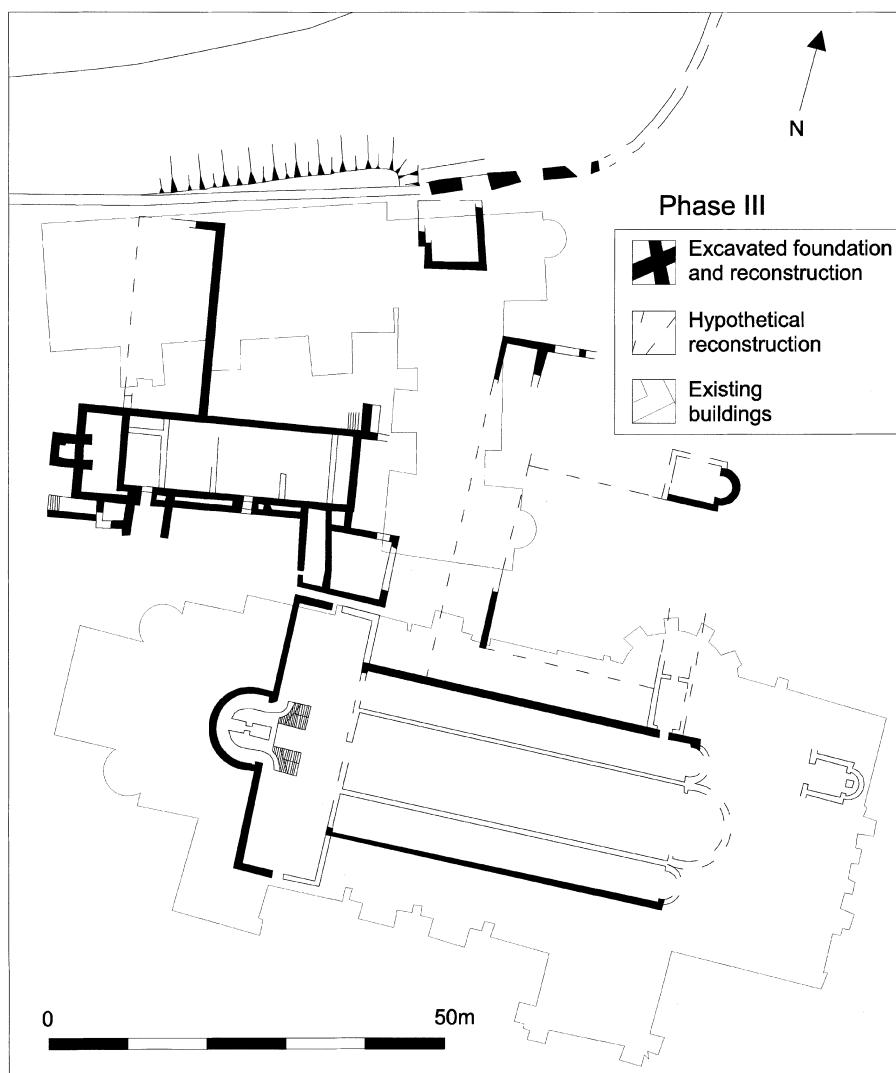


Fig. 23. Paderborn, Phase 3 palace buildings (after Gai, 'Die Pfalz Karls des Großen in Paderborn', fig. 9). Paderborn, Kaiserpfalz, Museum.

Fragments of walls and foundations of a later Carolingian palace have been found in the city of Frankfurt (fig. 24).³⁸ A hall building and a church are arranged according to a longitudinal east-west axis and connected by a gallery building of c. 40 m length. The whole extended to a length of 117 m. The palace building has been ascribed to the building activities of Louis the Pious, which were finished in 822. The church to the east was built by Louis the German and dedicated in 852. An earlier church building of unknown date had been on the same site.³⁹ The hall with inner dimensions of 26.50 to 12.20 m was divided into two naves by square pillars.⁴⁰ This is important for the hypothesis of a two-storeyed building, judged from the evidence of eleventh-century and later palaces. It was connected with smaller rooms adjacent to the short west side.

Recent excavations at St Denis have brought to light a residential building north-west of the abbey church, more than 50 m long, with a gallery along the south side and a possible tower at the south-east corner (fig. 25).⁴¹ The building, which can be dated archaeologically to the eighth century, is probably part of a royal palace, though this is not yet certain. Another promising place is Salerno, not far from Naples, where the Lombard duke Arechis II built a palace in the 760s and 770s. Investigations of the existing building of S. Pietro a Corte revealed a hall with an apse, which is interpreted as the palace chapel (fig. 26).⁴²

The position of Carolingian palaces in the general history of palace building between antiquity and the romanesque period can be discussed under three headings: firstly, the overall layout of the palace area; secondly, the position of the hall of the Carolingian

³⁸ Binding, *Deutsche Königspfalzen*, pp. 117–22. *Die deutschen Königspfalzen: Repertorium der Pfalzen, Königshöfe und übrigen Aufenthaltsorte der Könige im deutschen Reich des Mittelalters*, ed. by the Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte (Hessen, Göttingen, 1983–96), pp. 160–67.

³⁹ The publication, Andrea Hampel, *Der Kaiserdom zu Frankfurt am Main: Ausgrabungen 1991–93*, Beiträge zum Denkmalschutz in Frankfurt am Main, 8 (Nußloch, 1994), is in many points misleading; see my review in *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 45 (1995), 380–83.

⁴⁰ Ulrich Fischer, ‘Altstadtgrabung Frankfurt am Main’, in *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum*, Monographien, 1 (Mainz, 1975), II, 431: ‘ist für 1972 die Auffindung von drei starken Pfeilern innerhalb der karolingischen Halle zu nennen’—only one of these three pillars can be located on the plan, see his Beilage 42 or on other plans.

⁴¹ Wyss, ‘Saint-Denis’; Michel Wyss and others, *Atlas historique de Saint-Denis des origines au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1996), pp. 114 and 138. Michel Wyss, ‘L’Agglomération du haut Moyen Age aux abords de l’abbatiale de Saint-Denis’, in *Wohn- und Wirtschaftsbauten frühmittelalterlicher Klöster*, ed. by Hans-Rudolf Sennhauser (Zürich, 1996), pp. 259–68.

⁴² Paolo Peduto, ‘Un accesso alla storia di Salerno: Stratigrafie e materiali dell’area palaziale longobarda’, *Rassegna storica Salernitana*, n.s., 5.2 (1988), 9–63; Paolo Peduto, ‘Arechi II a Salerno: Continuità e rinnovamento’, *Rassegna storica Salernitana*, n.s., 15.1 (1998), 7–28. Alessandro Di Muro, *La cultura artistica della Langobardia minor nell’VIII secolo e la decorazione parietale e pavimentale della capella palatina die Arechi II a Salerno* (Salerno, 1996).

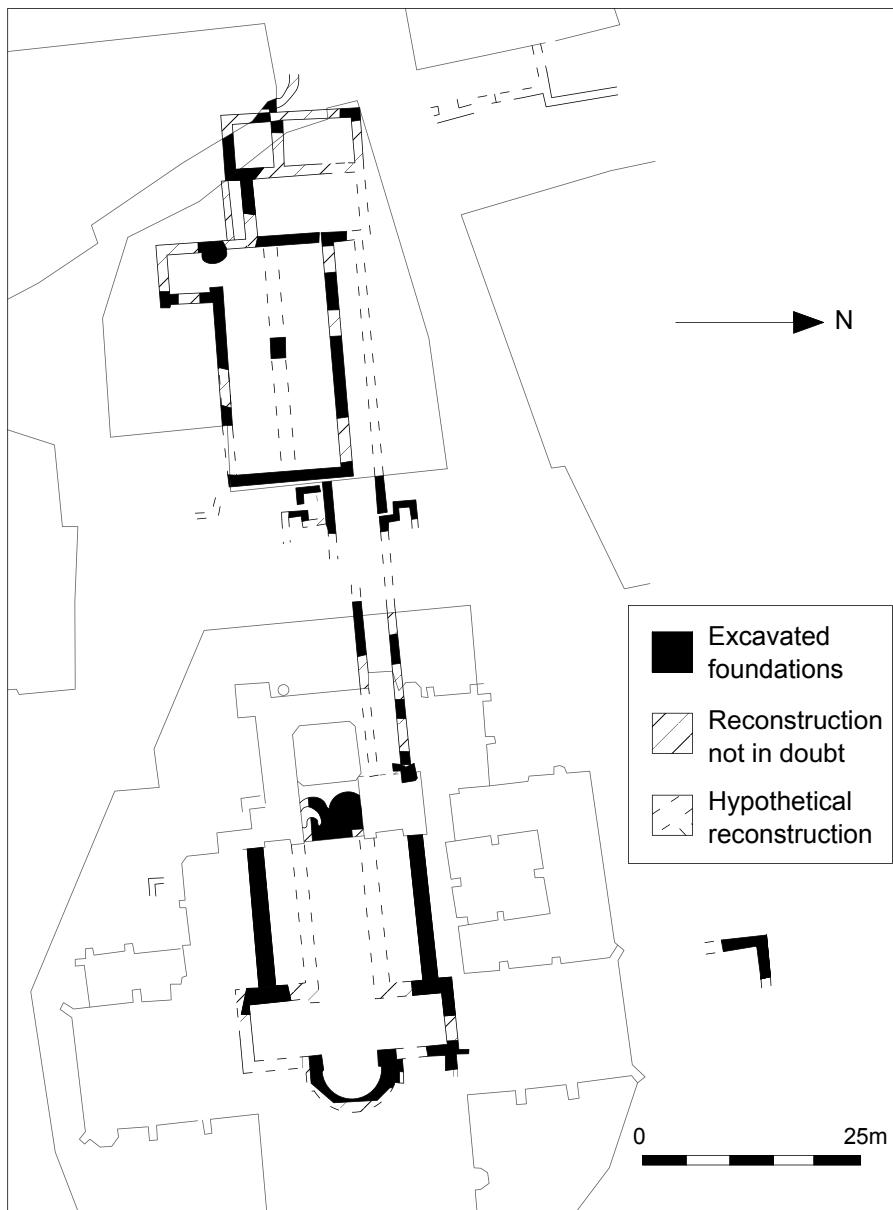


Fig. 24. Frankfurt-am-Main, palace complex and church (after Stamm, 'Zur karolingischen Königspfalz in Frankfurt am Main', Beilage 3).

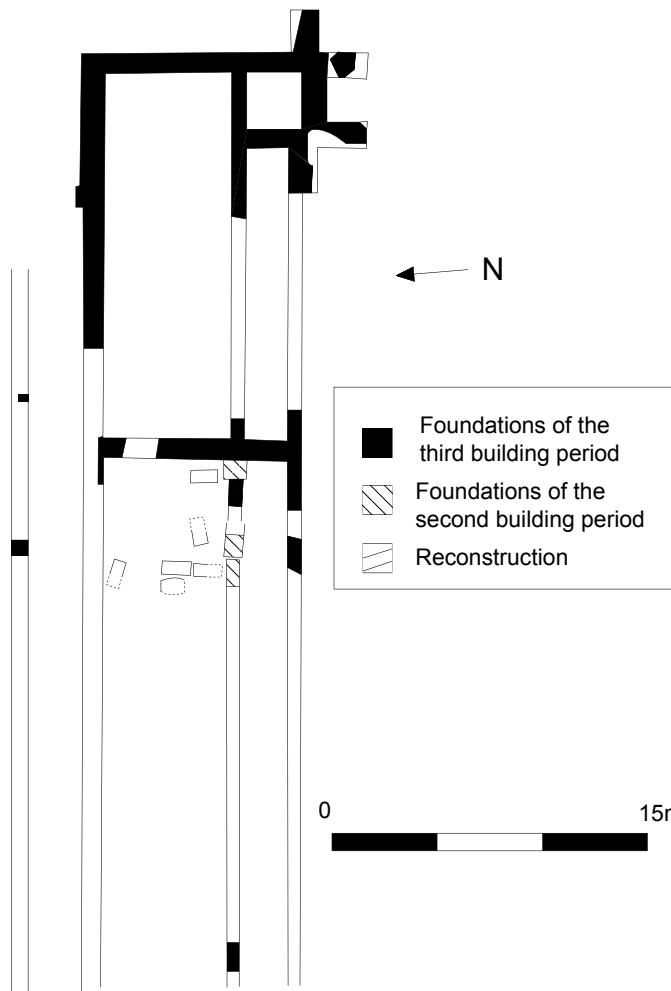


Fig. 25. St Denis, palace complex, north of the Abbey
(after Wyss, 'Saint-Denis', p. 139).

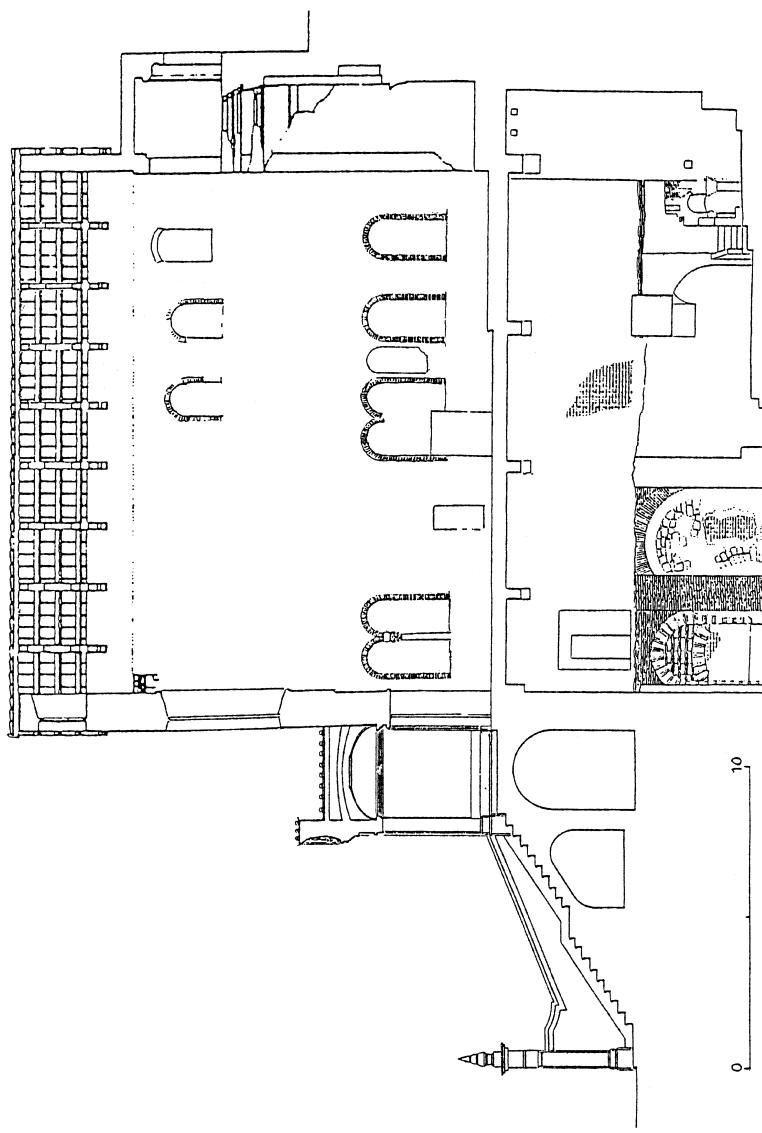


Fig. 26. Salerno, S Pietro a Corte, section. Below street level are remains of Roman buildings. The major part of the walls belong to the building of Arechi II. (From Peduto, 'Chiesa di San Pietro a Corte', p. 22 (with slight changes).)

palace between the hall with a longitudinal axis and the hall of transverse character with the throne of the lord in the middle of the longitudinal side facing the entrance on the other side; thirdly, the position of the Carolingian hall between the antique principle of arranging prestigious rooms at ground level and the medieval principle of raising the lord's major rooms to an elevated storey.

The first point, the overall layout, we have dealt with already. Concerning the second point, that is whether halls were defined as longitudinal or transverse, we find both types among the Carolingian examples. Ingelheim and the halls of the Lateran in Rome are longitudinal halls as were their late antique predecessors. In Aachen we are in doubt as to where the main entrance was. In Paderborn the entrances are on the long side but we do not know the place of the royal throne.

It is generally supposed that the transverse plan is derived from the typical Germanic king's hall. So far as I can find out, the latter is a myth, created by Albrecht Haupt in his book of 1909 on the 'Baukunst der Germanen'⁴³ and based only on a contemporary description of Attila's hall and on the so-called Belvedere near the hill of Naranco near Oviedo in Spain (figs 27a and 27b). Archaeological evidence of Germanic palaces is at present extremely scanty, and nothing supports the idea of a Germanic origin of the transverse type. It was undoubtedly a misunderstanding to take the Belvedere at the Naranco for a building of Germanic type. King Ramiro I built a palace there c. 848. Unfortunately we do not know more of it than a part of the church of San Miguel de Lino and a moderately sized hall building near by.⁴⁴ The vaulted hall with inner dimensions of 12 x 4.60 m has an open loggia on each short side. In the middle of both long sides there is an entrance building accessible by steps. We do not know the function of this very richly decorated building. It is supposed to have been used for smaller assemblies and banquets.

The example of the Belvedere leads us to our third point, the arrangement of the main rooms on the first floor. The ground floor, the main part of which was vaulted, gives the impression of a cellar with more technical and practical purposes. Its main function seems to be a substructure which was needed to raise the main hall. It was argued a few years ago that the double-storeyed hall type was first introduced in the palace of Emperor Otto I at Magdeburg. This type became well known from the eleventh century onward, in contrast to the antique type of the ground-floor hall.⁴⁵ But it is quite clear from the views of the Lateran palace in Rome that the great *triclinia* were situated on

⁴³ Albrecht Haupt, *Die älteste Kunst, insbesondere die Baukunst der Germanen* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 68, 209, and 2nd edn (1923), pp. 151 and 215.

⁴⁴ Sabine Noack-Haley and Achim Arbeiter, *Asturische Königsbauten des 9. Jahrhunderts*, *Madridrer Beiträge*, 22 (Mainz, 1994), 21–114, 115–42, 201–02.

⁴⁵ Cord Meckseper, 'Oben und Unten in der Architektur. Zur Entstehung einer abendländischen Raumkategorie', in *Architektur als politische Kultur*, ed. by Hermann Hipp and Ernst Seidl (Berlin, 1996), pp. 37–52. Cord Meckseper, 'Zur Doppelgeschossigkeit der beiden Triklinien Leos III: im Lateranpalast zu Rom', *Forschungen zu Burgen und Schlössern*, 4 (1998), 119–28.



Fig. 27a. Oviedo, the so-called Belvedere at the slope of Mount Naranco.
(photo, U. Lobbedey)

the first floor and connected with each other by a two-storeyed gallery. Even today the *Sancta Sanctorum*, being the former palace chapel of the Lateran, is situated on the first floor. In Paderborn, the first palace hall was built with the first floor over a substructure. We are not sure at Aachen whether there was a substructure which raised the main hall to the first floor or not. But in Ingelheim the hall is clearly at ground-floor level. Clearly both types occur in the Carolingian period. When we ask the question, which impulses led to the abandonment of the antique principle of ground-floor halls, I think we have to look again for the common sources of the Lateran and Aachen, that is, to Byzantine palace building.

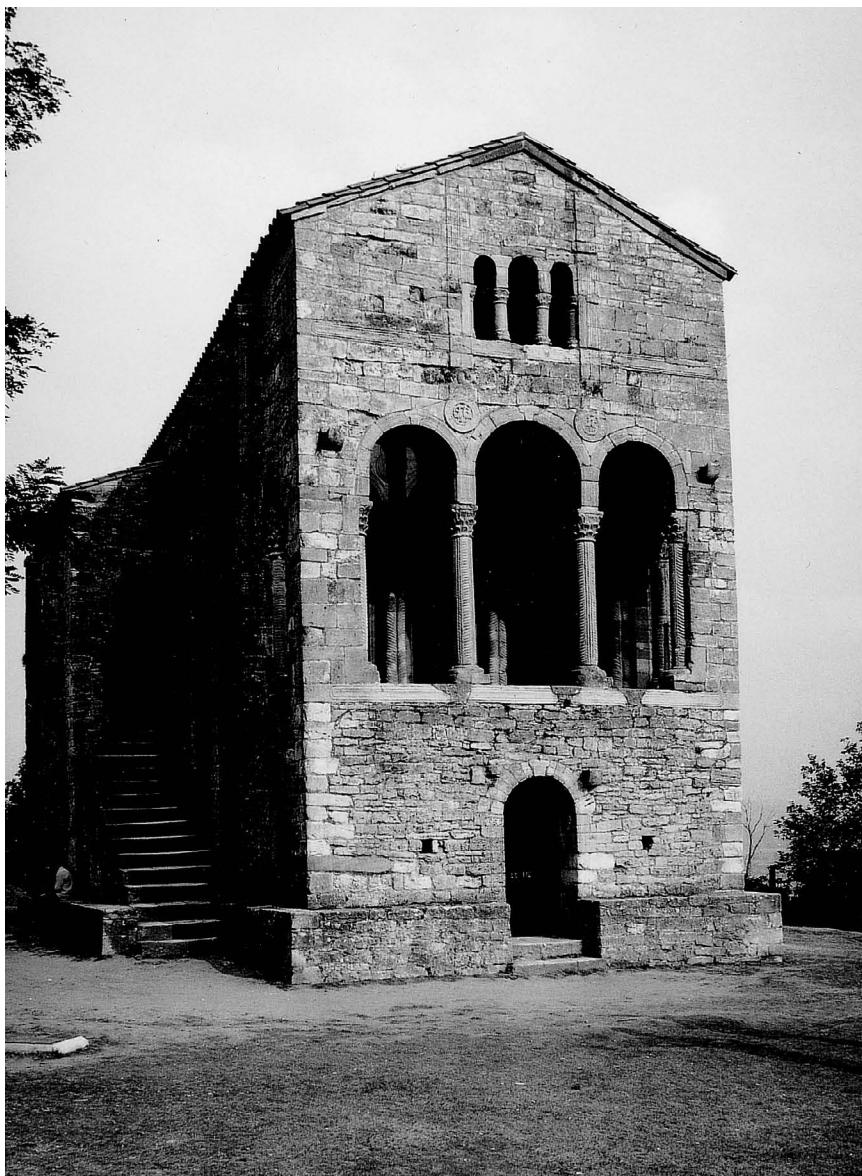


Fig. 27b. Oviedo, the so-called Belvedere at the slope of Mount Naranco.
(photo, U. Lobbedey)

Anglo-Saxon Courts

JAMES CAMPBELL

The history of the Anglo-Saxon court is largely lost and unknown. So far as it can be known it has been largely put together by L. M. Larson in his fine work of 1904 and by Pauline Stafford in her recent *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*. I am much indebted to both.¹ In seeking to indicate something of what may be known of the court one may begin by proceeding to the unknown from the known and so consider the most solid evidence for the scale and grandeur of the English royal court under the immediate successors of the Anglo-Saxon kings. That is to say the 16,200 square feet of Westminster Hall, where, if we are to believe Gaimar, three hundred richly dressed ushers led the guests of William Rufus each to his place.² Gaimar's imaginative account gives a vivid impression of the importance of entertainment and of ceremonial office in the exercise of power. Maybe everything had become different under the Normans, but Westminster Hall is at the very least a reminder that the Old English state was such that it could have supported a court on the largest and grandest scale.

Rather oddly, the English court site which is best known to us before Westminster is very early and very distant: Yeavering (Northumberland), a Northumbrian royal site chiefly of the earlier seventh century, situated far to the north of the Roman wall. Its salient features, as discovered and delineated by Dr Hope-Taylor, are familiar. It contained at least a dozen buildings, not all contemporaneous. Among them were several

¹ L. M. Larson, *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, WI, 1904), and P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), esp. pp. 96–161.

² H. M. Colvin in R. Allen Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works: The Middle Ages*, 2 vols (London, 1963), I, 45; Geoffroy Gaimar, *L'estoire des Engleis by Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. by A. Bell, Anglo-Norman Texts, 14–16 (Oxford, 1960), lines 5972–6035, and compare p. xi.

halls, the largest of which occupied about 2400 square feet.³ Their plan, with big doors halfway along the side walls, has recalled to many Bede's famous account of the Northumbrian nobleman who compared human life to the flight of a sparrow from darkness to darkness. For two of the halls a very interesting interior plan survives, with something like a throne on a platform in front of the central fire.⁴ This reminds one of a passage in Stephanus's *Life of Wilfrid*, relating to a letter sent by Ebroin, mayor of the palace, to Aldgisel, King of the Frisians, urging him to betray Wilfrid.

The king at once ordered the letter to be read for all to hear while we were present and while the messengers were feasting in the palace with his people. After the reading he took the missive in his hands, tore it up in the sight of all, and threw it into the fire which was burning in front of him.⁵

By far the most remarkable feature of the royal site was the so-called 'theatre', a tiered feature of banked seats, facing a sheltered platform behind which stood a pole of some kind. In its final form this extraordinary construction could have seated over three hundred people.⁶ It was extremely solidly built, a triumph of Dark Age carpentry, reminiscent perhaps of much of that which so impressed Priscus when he visited Attila at his Pannonian fortress. There was also something Roman about its arena-like quality. I would venture to say that Yeavering, and above all the theatre, is of crucial importance for the understanding of early Anglo-Saxon monarchy. It tells us of scale and grandeur, elaborate accommodation, and activities involving hundreds of people.

Yeavering was of course a special place, but how special? How many court centres did early Anglo-Saxon kings have, how far did the scale of their courts and the number of those who attended them vary? Complex questions arise. Bede's explicit words about Canterbury make it clear that this was, in something like the modern sense, the capital of Kent. The same word *metropolis* is used by Bede to describe London in relation to Essex.⁷ It is likely that York occupied a similar position in relation to Northumbria. This, of course, is related to the question as to how far the Northumbrian kings may have made use of the headquarters building of the Roman legionary fortress. Nevertheless, Anglo-Saxon kings from the beginning to the end were in substantial manner itinerant. Stephanus provides us with an explicit account of King Ecgfrith and his queen 'making their progress with worldly pomp and daily rejoicing and feasts through cities,

³ B. Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering: An Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria* (London, 1977).

⁴ Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering*, pp. 120, 139, 161, and esp. fig. 59.

⁵ *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), pp. 5–53.

⁶ Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering*, pp. 119–21, 168–69, 241–44, and 279–80.

⁷ J. Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp. 99–119 (p. 103).

fortresses and villages'.⁸ One may indeed have here a progress related to the *gwestfa*-system, documented in medieval Wales and hinted at in Anglo-Saxon charters from some areas, whereby the ruler went round and once or twice a year was entertained at a succession of central places.⁹ When kings moved in this way where did they stay? Sometimes, we know, at an abbey. Alternatively, if an early king could go to dine with a *comes* then presumably he may have stayed with such.¹⁰ The most likely thing, however, is that kings generally stayed at royal villas. An identifiable 155 of these from the whole Anglo-Saxon period have been listed by Professor Sawyer, and although, as Dr Cubitt has reminded us, the status of some of these is questionable, there were certainly many others so far unidentified, or unknown by any name.¹¹ In nearly all cases we simply do not know whether at such places there was permanent large-scale accommodation or whether there was not. It would be reasonable to assume that by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period at a place such as Oxford where the court often met,¹² there would have been some permanent establishment, most likely on the site of what came to be called Beaumont Palace but possibly at Headington. The presence of the dwellings of a considerable number of the ecclesiastical and lay great in late Anglo-Saxon Oxford suggests how it may have been something of a 'court town'. By contrast it would be rash to assume that there would have been substantial accommodation at such a place as Enham, a Hampshire village, where so far as we know, court or council met but once, probably in 1008. The name Enham suggests, as Dr Lawson has pointed out, a most peculiar possible determinative element in the choice of locations for the meeting of the late Anglo-Saxon court. A purpose of the Enham meeting was the promulgation of legislation largely relating to peace. It was at about this time that Æthelred introduced his shortlived *Agnes Dei* penny which replaced the royal portrait with a depiction of the Lamb of God and bore on its reverse a dove. The place-name Enham means 'the place where lambs are bred'. Dr Lawson suggests that 'the choice

⁸ *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ed. and trans. by Colgrave, pp. 78–79.

⁹ W. Rees, 'Survivals of Ancient Celtic Custom in Medieval England', in his *Angles and Britons*, O'Donnell Lectures (Cardiff, 1963), pp. 152–62.

¹⁰ Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* [hereafter *HE*], ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, rev. edn (Oxford, 1991), iii, 22.

¹¹ P. Sawyer, 'The Royal Tun in Pre-Conquest England', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 273–99; C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650 – c. 850* (London and New York, 1995), 37 n (Cubitt, pp. 27–38, provides the best discussion of the determinants and nature of meeting places); F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1971), p. 346; D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 87–91 and 94; and Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978–1016: A Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), esp. pp. 269–73, give valuable information on royal movements and assemblies.

¹² J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 158–59.

of the village [...] may have owed much to the symbolic value of its name, and to the fact that there are quite likely to have been lambs in the surrounding fields [...] as there still are in May'.¹³ In this connection we should bear in mind that the capacity for erecting important temporary buildings by no means began with the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The late-twelfth-century *Boldon Book* specifies that when the Bishop of Durham came to his great hunt there were to be built for him a great hall in the forest sixty feet long and sixteen feet wide 'within the posts' with a shambles, larder, chamber, latrines; also a chapel, forty feet long by fifteen feet wide; and the requirements and routines for such constructions may have been very old.¹⁴ In a world in which the eminent were peripatetic a great man's tent would be quite something. Ælfric Modercope left a tent in his will to the Bishop of Elmham not long before the Conquest.¹⁵ Doubtless it was more than a Boy Scout affair.

Courts which were largely peripatetic were necessarily mounted. We get a glimpse of the royal stables in the passage in which Bede describes a painful scene which arose after King Oswine of Deira gave Aidan a horse, richly caparisoned. The saint gave it to the first beggar he came across. The King was understandably angry and said that he had other horses, nothing like so good and so more suitable for charitable purposes; he would have given Aidan one of those had he known what the holy man proposed.¹⁶ One of the mysteries of Yeavering is the discovery there in 1885/6 of what was said to be very large quantities of horse bones representing 'complete and articulate skeletons'.¹⁷ One can not, however wildly, fail to recall that the modern excavation of the immediate environs of the burial of Childeric I at Tournai discovered that in likely association with the tomb were three pits, each containing ten or more horse skeletons.¹⁸ In any case we have to think of a large equine element in Anglo-Saxon court culture. Perhaps the best idea of what Anglo-Saxon noblemen say c. 800 would have looked like is given by the carving of Pictish horsemen riding by, on a great stone slab from Meigle in Perthshire.¹⁹

Even more important than transport was commissariat. Some indication of the scale of provision needed for a great court is provided by a German annalist claiming that Otto I's entourage daily consumed 1000 pigs and sheep, 2700 gallons of wine, the same

¹³ M. K. Lawson, *Cnut: The Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London, 1993), pp. 59–60.

¹⁴ *Boldon Book: Northumberland and Durham*, ed. by D. Austin (Chichester, 1982), pp. 36–37, and Rees 'Survivals of Ancient Celtic Custom', pp. 163–64.

¹⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), no. XXVIII.

¹⁶ Bede, *HE*, iii, 14.

¹⁷ Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering*, pp. 13–14.

¹⁸ E. James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 62–64.

¹⁹ F. T. Wainwright, *The Problem of the Picts* (Edinburgh, 1955), pl. 11. (The gait of the carved horses suggests careful schooling.)

amount of beer, 1000 measures of grain, and other food-stuffs.²⁰ *Domesday Book* indicates that the kings of Wessex had a system whereby particular estates were responsible for providing the court's sustenance for one night, the *firma unius noctis*.²¹ This system had been subject to commutation and was probably obsolescent by the time of Domesday. That food rents for the court could matter at a somewhat earlier date is suggested by an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the crisis year of 1006. 'Then the king had gone across the Thames into Shropshire and received there his food rents in the Christmas season.'²² Shropshire was unlikely to have been on the ordinary royal beat and I think that what one has here is the echo of some special arrangements made to ensure that the court got supplies for the Christmas feasting season at a time when the king had fled to a distant frontier. The processing of food for large numbers must have been hardly less difficult than its acquisition. The earliest evidence for a watermill in Anglo-Saxon England comes from the, probably, royal site at Old Windsor, where a triple-wheeled horizontal mill is now dated, on dendrochronological grounds, to the late seventh century. One of its leats was some 1100 m long, over 6 m wide, and up to 4 m deep.²³ This inspires reflection upon the reference in the laws of Æthelbert of Kent to a female grinding slave belonging to the king.²⁴ How much woman power would a royal court have needed in the absence of water power?

To study the documents from the Carolingian world is for the Anglo-Saxon historian to be struck by envy and placed in a cruel dilemma. Such sources as Einhard or Ermoldus or Hincmar or Notker, supplemented by what remains above ground or has been excavated at Aachen or elsewhere, provide information whose width and depth can not possibly be matched by anything we have for England. Even the relatively well-documented court of Alfred has nothing to compare.²⁵ A dilemma follows, and it is not one which applies by any means solely to the nature and activities of the royal court. How far is Carolingian information indicative at least in a general way about what went

²⁰ J. Westfall Thompson, *Feudal Germany* (Chicago, 1928), p. 339.

²¹ P. A. Stafford, 'The "farm of one night" and the Organisation of King Edward's Estates in Domesday', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 33 (1980), 491–502, and compare Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 102–04.

²² *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* ed. by C. Plummer and J. Earle, 2 vols (Oxford, 1892), I, 137, and *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. by D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas and S. I. Tucker (London, 1965), p. 88.

²³ *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes, and D. Scragg (Oxford, 1999); articles on 'Mills' by P. Rahtz (pp. 313–15), and on 'Windsor' by J. Blair (p. 484); and D. M. Wilson 'Craft and Industry', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by D. M. Wilson (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 253–81 (p. 276).

²⁴ *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. by F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 4–5.

²⁵ For Alfred's court, see David Pratt, 'Persuasion and Invention at the Court of King Alfred the Great', below.

on in England? Hincmar wrote his *De ordine palatii* in 882, but drew largely upon a work from about 814. He describes elaborately organized annual meetings of the great, and indeed of the rather less great.²⁶ Ought we to imagine something of the kind in England? Similarly when Notker describes Charlemagne's dining arrangements. First the Emperor was waited upon by dukes and kings. Then the dukes and kings had their dinner served by counts and nobles.²⁷ And so on in five successive stages, so that the last people to eat did not get their meal before midnight. Asser describes Alfred as a builder as follows:

What shall I say of the cities and towns which he restored and of others which he built where none had been before? Of the buildings marvellously wrought with gold and silver under his direction? Of the royal halls and chambers wonderfully built of stone and wood at his command? Of royal villas made of masonry removed from the old sites and most admirably rebuilt in more suitable places by the king's order?²⁸

Are we to take this as evidence for a physical magnificence, not least a court magnificence, comparable if perhaps only at a country cousin's distance, to what we know to have been there at Aachen or at Ingelheim? The only concrete clue we have to the physical magnificence of Alfred's court is the Alfred Jewel. One late Anglo-Saxon royal dwelling or staying place has been excavated, at Cheddar.²⁹ Councils met there, but there is no means of placing this relatively unpretentious establishment in a palatial hierarchy. It is to be regretted that the determinative excavations by Martin and Birthe Biddle at Winchester could not be extended to the likely palace site to the west of the Old Minster. This, however, can be said, that the sheer scale of the fortifying and town-founding activities which they and other archaeologists have illuminated has, in broad but crucial terms, confirmed what might otherwise have seemed the over-colourful rhetoric of Asser, and this makes it possible, even likely, that the arrangements of the Alfredian court were elaborate and even magnificent.

At the very least, comparison with Carolingian sources serves to make the Anglo-Saxon darkness visible and provides an agenda of questions in relation to the last generations of Anglo-Saxon history. First, what were the offices of the court and royal household? Our knowledge of these in an earlier period is very fragmentary. Bede

²⁶ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, ed. and trans. into German by T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH, *Fontes*, 3 (Hannover, 1980); English translation: D. Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism* (New York, 1970), pp. 208–27.

²⁷ Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, I. 59, ed. by H. Haefele, MGH, SRG, n.s., 12 (Berlin, 1959), c. 11, p. 16.

²⁸ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, *Together with the Annals of St Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), c. 91, p. 77.

²⁹ Allen Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, *The History of the King's Works*, I, 4–5; P. Rahtz, s.v. 'Cheddar', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Lapidge and others, pp. 100–02.

mentions only two royal household officers. One comes in a famous instance of the charity of Oswald. He was sitting down to dinner one Easter Sunday with a silver dish in front of him, laden with royal delicacies, when in came his minister to whom, Bede says, was assigned the charge of relieving the poor, who reported that a multitude of poor men had gathered from all round and were asking alms from the King. Oswald not only ordered the royal food to be given to the poor, but had the dish broken up and given in tiny pieces to them. This story acquires an added dimension in the light of a text which appears to describe the Merovingian court. This refers to officials called *consules* whose function it was to make the king's gifts. The *consul*, it says, sprinkles little pieces of silver on the ground.³⁰ The poor scramble for these while the happy king looks on, smiling. While it may be that what we have here is an apparent link deriving from some untraced hagiographical topos, the parallel is nevertheless suggestive of a degree of organization at Oswald's court not otherwise readily visible; and Sutton Hoo has certainly taught us that a king could have a silver dish. Our second reference from Bede relates to a man called Ouni who became a monk at Lastingham c. 670. Bede tells us that he had come to Northumbria from East Anglia with Æthelthryth, the queen of Ecgfrith and daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles. He says that Ouni had been *primus ministrorum et princeps domus eius*.³¹ This is pretty strong evidence that a queen had her own household which might be run at least in part by men from her own kingdom. The same impression of a distinct queen's sphere is given by Stephanus's account of what happened when Wilfrid first went to court. His first step had to be to obtain 'arms, and horses, and garments for himself and his servants in which he could fitly stand before the royal presence', another reminder of the needful grandeur of an early court. He made his way to Oswy's queen Eanfled, was presented to her, and found grace in her sight. She was by origin a Kentish princess and so when Wilfrid wished to go to Rome she sent him forth with all honour to her kinsman, the King of Kent.³² Such references as these and a few others are all we have to court officials from before the tenth century. Among the others perhaps the most important come from Asser when he tells us that Alfred's mother was the daughter of Ealdorman Oslac the *famosus pincerna* of King Æthelwulf.³³ The nature and position of high officers can only be sketched in the merest outline from the surviving sources. The most important tenth-century indication comes from the will of King Eadred who died in 955. This refers to legacies made to three major groups of court officers, each given in the plural. They are *discthegnas*, *hraegelthegnas*, and *byreles*.³⁴ These are people who would be called in Latin *disciferi*,

³⁰ J. Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 49–67 (pp. 54–55).

³¹ Bede, *HE*, iv, 3.

³² *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ed. and trans. by Colgrave, pp. 6–9.

³³ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 2, p. 4.

³⁴ *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by F. E. Harmer (Cambridge, 1914), no. 21.

pincernae, and *cubicularii* or *camerarii*, seneschals, butlers, and chamberlains. Dr Keynes's study of the charters of Æthelred's reign suggests that this King had similar small groups of men by these descriptions in his service.³⁵ In charter witness lists they are probably commonly included among the *ministri* witnessing without being distinguished by office. The *ministri* of the charters look as if they are in general the thegns in the standing service of the king.

Although the question of attendance at the court of late Anglo-Saxon kings has been seriously considered for the later period, some years ago by Professor Oleson and more recently by Dr Keynes, much still remains and is likely to remain obscure.³⁶ We can, as both these scholars have pointed out, be certain that on occasion the court was attended by men other than the very great, or by the *ministri* who were normally there. A very good example is that of the late-tenth-century confirmation of the will of Æthelric of Bocking which, after listing a number of courtiers of the kind normally listed, adds that there were other (unnamed) thegns present from far and wide, both West Saxons and Mercians, Danes and English.³⁷ Dr Keynes in particular has shown that charter witness lists can not be used as evidence for absence, particularly for the absence of relatively lowly men. Nevertheless, they can give general indications about the court, suggestive, though not conclusive. Thus he shows that

particularly during the reign of Edward the Confessor there seems to have been a greater degree of fluctuation in the composition of the attesting groups of *ministri*: this may reflect rotation, or it may suggest that the element in permanent or frequent attendance on the king had been considerably reduced and that a greater proportion of the thegns was derived from the area where the *Witenagemot* was held.³⁸

But in all these matters our evidence is so thin that discretion has to be the better part of generalization. A safe banality is this, that there were occasions when the court was much more widely attended than was by any means always the case. These are occasions such as those which the witness lists of, for example, some of Athelstan's charters and some of Edgar's give one a good impression of wide and grand attendance. The nature of such great assemblies is imperfectly understood. There is obviously some relationship to great royal feasts which sometimes at least coincided with the major feasts of the Church. We do not know whether there was an Anglo-Saxon equivalent to the regular

³⁵ Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 158–62; see also Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 96–101 and note her suggestion of a reorganization of the royal households c. 1060, p. 104.

³⁶ T. J. Oleson, *The Witenagemot in the Reign of Edward the Confessor* (London, 1955), pp. 54–60; Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 154–63.

³⁷ *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. by Whitelock, no. XVI (2).

³⁸ Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, p. 160, n. 27, and compare Oleson, *The Witenagemot*, pp. 54–60.

summons of councils as described, or certainly not just imagined by Hincmar in his *De ordine*. We do not know whether there was something like the approximate routine of the early Anglo-Norman kings in holding widely attended feasts and wearing their crowns at more or less predictable places at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun. There may well have been a good deal more regularity in such affairs than can be demonstrated.

It is also reasonable to assume a great deal more grandeur. The nature of some of our sources, not least the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and it may be the nature of some of our historians of Anglo-Saxon England have, perhaps too often, invested Anglo-Saxon events with a kind of inappropriate starkness and simplicity. It is what might be called peripheral sources which may do most to reveal the true nature of the court. An example is William of Malmesbury's account of a ceremony by which Alfred invested his grandson Athelstan with a 'Saxon' sword in a golden sheath, a scarlet cloak, and a gem-studded belt. It could, but need not, be based on a contemporary poem.³⁹ It is likely that among the major functions of the court was the grand entertainment of ambassadors and foreign visitors. Notker tells of the elaborated ostentation with which Charlemagne received ambassadors from Byzantium.⁴⁰ The rank of the husbands of Athelstan's sisters, including the future Otto I, Charles the Simple, and Hugh the Great, is a sufficient indication of the status of an English court's diplomatic exchanges. (The reception of ambassadors could be a risky business. In the seventh century Edwin, King of Northumbria, had nearly been murdered by a West Saxon ambassador with a poisoned dagger.⁴¹ This reminds one of Edward Barton's embassy to Murad III in Elizabeth's reign. As he approached the Sultan's presence he was grabbed by two pashas, apparently a routine precaution against ambassadorial assassins.⁴²) About the grandest account we have of a great diplomatic occasion from our period is in the poem by Ermoldus, describing the reception of Harold, King of Denmark, to the court of Louis the Pious. Harold was vastly impressed by the splendour of the imperial court, converted to Christianity, was baptised, and was given lots of presents and splendid entertainment which included a great hunt on an island in the Rhine.⁴³ Two things may be singled out here: that all these glorious details come in a poem, and that a hunt plays a very large part. It is likely that poetry was the genre in which a great deal of court and other royal and noble activity was described, sometimes of a kind which in other centuries would have found its way into narrative prose sources. One may wonder, for example, whether

³⁹ M. Lapidge, 'Some Latin Poems as Evidence for the Reign of Athelstan', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 79–81.

⁴⁰ Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, II, c. 6, ed. by Haefele, pp. 55–57.

⁴¹ Bede, *HE*, ii, 9.

⁴² N. Barber, *The Lords of the Golden Horn: From Suleiman the Magnificent to Kamal Ataturk* (London, 1973), p. 73.

⁴³ Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hlodowici Pii*, ed. and trans. by Edmond Faral, *Ermold le Noir, Poème sur Louis le Pieux*, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Age, 14 (Paris, 1932), pp. 167–91.

the one fairly detailed description we have of a grand English court occasion in the tenth century, the rowing on the Dee of King Edgar by lesser rulers from the Irish Sea province, does not derive from a poem in Latin or in English.⁴⁴

No account of the life of a medieval or Dark Age court could be complete without emphasis on the central importance of the hunt. William the Conqueror was by no means the first King of England whose heart was with the deer. Asser emphasizes how devoted Alfred was to the hunt and tells us that he went hunting as far away as Cornwall.⁴⁵ King Edmund was almost killed when he was hunting in the Cheddar Gorge. Some of the royal villas of the Anglo-Saxon kings were specifically attributed for hunting purposes. Harold set to build a major hunting lodge (*magnum [...] edificium*, according to 'Florence')⁴⁶ as far away as Portskewet on the borders of Wales and hoped to entertain the King there. It is likely that the hunts were matters of high ceremony and great entertainment. Ermoldus probably gives one a better idea of what would have happened had one gone hunting with King Alfred than does any source of English origin. The most striking English evidence we have about a hunt and its likely antiquity comes from the *Boldon Book* with its numerous references to the great hunt, the *magna caza*, of the bishops of Durham. It sounds as if it was an annual occasion and it was one for which various tenants had to provide, for example, dogs, ropes, and buildings.⁴⁷ *Domesday Book* has many references to various renders and obligations in relation to the king's hunting activities, for example, but not only, to the duty of looking after his hounds. The court had other amusements involving animals. A reference in *Domesday Book* suggests that in Edward the Confessor's time these included bear baiting, for among the renders owed to the Crown by the city of Norwich was that of a bear and dogs to bait the bear.⁴⁸

In a short paper it is hardly possible to do more than to signal particular aspects of the relationships between court and Church. Conspicuous is the intimate connection of the late Anglo-Saxon court with certain Benedictine monasteries. The paradigm is, of course, Edward the Confessor's Westminster where palace and monastery were, and remain, contiguous and almost one, an arrangement by no means abnormal in European terms; compare, for example, Carolingian arrangements at Paderborn or Norman at Fécamp.⁴⁹ There was an almost equally close relationship at Winchester where the royal

⁴⁴ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. by R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, 3 vols (Oxford, 1995), II, 422–25.

⁴⁵ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, c. 74, ed. by Stevenson, p. 55.

⁴⁶ *Two of the Saxon Chronicles*, ed. by Plummer and Earle, I, 190; *Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. by Darlington and McGurk, p. 596.

⁴⁷ *Boldon Book*, ed. by Austin, pp. 11, 13, 29, 37, 41, 45, 53, and 57.

⁴⁸ *Domesday Book: Norfolk*, ed. by P. Brown, 2 vols (Chichester, 1984), I, 1 (61) (fol. 117b).

⁴⁹ A. Renoux, 'Fouilles sur le cité du chateau ducal de Fécamp (Xe–XIIe siècle). Bilan provisoire', *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, 4 (1981), 133–52.

palace was at a very short distance from the Old Minster which was immediately beside the New Minster with the Nunnaminster just across the road. It is possible that Abingdon's specially close relation with the Crown may have been connected with the monastery's possibly being used, so I imagine, as a staging post when the kings went from Winchester to the Thames valley along which one may guess them to have travelled by water.

The intimacy of the royal connections with the Church is particularly strong and apparent over many centuries in relation to feasting. The feasts of which we hear most are those associated with the foundation or dedication of monasteries and their churches. Stephanus tells us that upon the dedication of the church at Ripon two kings and many great men were there and the feast lasted three days and nights.⁵⁰ Almost three hundred years later, when the foundations for the church at Abingdon were laid, the company met, the doors were locked, and the celebrations continued so long and so effectively that some Northumbrian guests passed out. In the fine description which we have of the dedication ceremonies of Ramsey in 992 (though the king was not present, the ealdorman of East Anglia and the Archbishop of York were), Byrhtferth stresses the luxury both of the refreshments and of the vessels in which they were offered.⁵¹ Byrhtferth, in his life of Saint Oswald, tells of the Easter festival at which King Edgar inaugurated a great programme of monastic foundation. He describes how there came to the King all the eminent *primates* and distinguished *duces* and powerful *milites* from all the *castelli* and *oppides civitates and territorii*; with them came great bishops with their retinues, *dignitas totius Albionis, and populus infinitus*.⁵² The King received them all royally, granting them the delights of joy for that Easter. I think we need to have very little doubt that feasting, and above all royal feasting, was near the heart of the Anglo-Saxon polity through many centuries. The feast at which Oswald had the silver dish broken up also took place at Easter.⁵³ We might also recall that Easter is by name a pagan festival, that entertainment with alcohol may have had a quasi-religious aspect, and that the most ceremonious feast of all, the coronation banquet, last held for the coronation of George IV, could have antedated any religious service of inauguration.⁵⁴ Indeed much of the ceremony and continuity of the court may have been very old. Courts can maintain long and strange traditions. Every now and again some tiny detail of Anglo-Saxon court life can strike a curiously continuous chord. Thus the C-version of the Chronicle tells us that in 1042 Harthacnut died while he was 'standing at his drink', and he

⁵⁰ *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ed. by Colgrave, p. 36.

⁵¹ J. Campbell, 'England c. 991', in *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact*, ed. by Janet Cooper (London, 1993), pp. 1–17 (pp. 1, 5).

⁵² *The Historians of the Church of York and Its Archbishops*, ed. by J. Raine, *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, 71, 3 vols (London, 1879–94), 1, 425.

⁵³ See above.

⁵⁴ Mr P. Wormald made this point to me.

suddenly fell to the ground with fearful convulsions. What does it mean by ‘standing at his drink’?⁵⁵ The reference could be to the custom which still prevails at feasts in some Colleges and Livery Companies of circulating a loving cup in such a way that each participant rises in turn to drink from it. The term ‘loving cup’ is itself interesting and relates to the ecclesiastical use of *caritas* to describe drinking together.⁵⁶ A more significant thing about dining may be its connection with precedence: a key thing in many courts. Dr Keynes has shown that the witness lists of charters, and in particular those of the later tenth and earlier eleventh centuries, display remarkable regularities. Thus the ealdormen and *ministri* appear almost always in precisely the same order, except that there seems to be evidence for very occasional promotions or demotions in ranking. A plausible explanation for this is that courtiers sat in order of precedence as the author of the twelfth-century *Lex Castrensis* said the households of the Norwegian kings did.⁵⁷

Norway is one of the two lands to which one must turn when trying to glimpse courts as nerve centres of government. There are, I believe, only two treatises from between the ninth century and the thirteenth in which a contemporary sets out the nature and functions of a western European royal court. One, *De ordine palati*, is by the great Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims (845–82), very near the end of his life, as advice to the young king, Carloman,⁵⁸ drawing on an earlier work, from the time of Charlemagne, by Adalhard of Corbie. The other is *Konings Skuggsjá* (*The King’s Mirror*), an Old Norse work, probably written in the 1240s, by a cleric with good experience of the Norwegian court.⁵⁹ Both assist in ordering possibilities about Anglo-Saxon royal courts, for which we have no coherent information, merely scraps enabling one to try to shed a flickering light from one angle or another.

Both treatises describe the court as a complex and ordered institution. In Hincmar’s work special importance attached to his description of annual assemblies and their role in legislation. There is too much here for pursuit in a summary to sketch, though one may note that Edgar’s Easter assembly which Byrhtferth describes, with *populus infinitus* present, may correspond not too inappropriately to Hincmar’s larger annual assembly with ‘those of lower station [...] present in order to hear the decisions and

⁵⁵ *Two of the Saxon Chronicles*, ed. by Plummer and Earle, I, 162: ‘swa he æt his drince stód’.

⁵⁶ Campbell, ‘England c. 991’, p. 6.

⁵⁷ J. Campbell, ‘Some Agents and Agencies of the Late Anglo-Saxon State’, in *Domesday Studies: Papers Read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers Winchester*, ed. by J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 201–18 (p. 217).

⁵⁸ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, pp. 32–34.

⁵⁹ *The King’s Mirror*, ed. and trans. by L. M. Larson (New York, 1917), and compare L. M. Larson, ‘The Household of the Norwegian Kings in the Thirteenth Century’, *American Historical Review*, 13 (1907), 459–79.

also occasionally to deliberate concerning them'.⁶⁰ No less interesting is Hincmar's emphasis on the king's household and court as something of a representative institution. Hincmar says that care was taken to select the officials of the court from different regions; for this facilitated access to the palace for people of all ranks from all areas in search of redress or justice.⁶¹ His account of this reminds one of the complicated truth and distant history represented by the now diverged meanings of 'court' in English: 'The establishment and surroundings of a sovereign with his councillors and retinue', but also 'A court of judicature, of law, or of administration'.⁶²

Some of the essence of what Hincmar conveys to us is the sense of the court as the heart of the state organization, organism one might say, with an arterial connection to provincial life and activity. The anonymous author of *The King's Mirror* conveys the same broad message, just possibly with a more direct relevance to England. He says that the royal household is composed of various grades of follower. Among the more senior are the *hirdmen*; they are at all times with the king and eat and drink with him; they are like kinsmen 'in a sense stewards of the realm'; they are expected to be models of behaviour and deportment, especially on diplomatic occasions.⁶³ The term *hirdmen* seems to have been borrowed from England.⁶⁴ 'Hired' in Old English is a word with a range of meanings from 'brotherhood' to 'household', from 'court'—not least the king's court—to 'royal bodyguard'.⁶⁵ This apparent borrowing from the vocabulary of the English polity does not, of course, justify assumption that *The King's Mirror* need shed more than a distant light on eleventh-century England, though the supposition that it might at least do so much is strengthened by the knowledge that the form of thirteenth-century Norwegian royal writs certainly derives from that used in thirteenth-century England.⁶⁶ A most important statement in the *Mirror* is this: 'They should be chosen from all classes and not from the wealthy and distinguished classes only.' The *hirdmen* are paid. One is here reminded, of course, of the arrangements of Alfred's court as described by Asser: Alfred paid not only his *bellatores* but also the *ministri nobilissimi* who served at the court in various capacities by rota.⁶⁷ There is another class of house

⁶⁰ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, c. 18; translation from Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism*, p. 222.

⁶¹ Hincmar, *De ordine palatii*, c. 25; translation from Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism*, p. 217.

⁶² *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, rev. edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1973).

⁶³ *The King's Mirror*, ed. and trans. Larson, chapter xxiv.

⁶⁴ L. Musset, *Les pays scandinaves au moyen age*, p. 109 n.

⁶⁵ J. Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford, 1898); *English Historical Documents* c. 500–1042, ed. by D. Whitelock, 2nd edn (London, 1979), no. 51.

⁶⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, ed. by F. E. Harmer (Manchester, 1952), pp. 4–5.

⁶⁷ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 100, p. 86; *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, ed. by Harmer, p. 86, and *Select English Historical Documents*, ed. by Harmer, pp. 15–19.

carls who have half the pay of *hirdmen*. They act 'as spies throughout the kingdom', are sent to kill the king's enemies and to share their wealth, and help to keep guard. They eat with the *hirdmen* only at Christmas and at Easter.⁶⁸ Yet another class of house carl are always present at court, but draw no wages, and do not eat with the *hirdmen*; they do such service as the steward assigns them, going on journeys and performing manual labour in the garth.⁶⁹ This apparent combination of riding and manual services may remind one of English radknights and others somewhere near the bottom of the institutional hierarchy. Another class of house carls rarely come to court: all they receive from the king is protection and support in securing justice from others; some of these are peasants, some merchants. Their duty is always to join and assist royal officials when they come to present the king's causes of business.⁷⁰ Yet another class of house carls receive varying levels of pay. Some are the sons of 'the king's landed men', some are peasants so wealthy that they seem to work with 'landed men'.⁷¹

A thirteenth-century Norwegian tract can not be a source of information about the nature of the English court; not only is it Norwegian, not only may it rationalize or idealize, but of course it may very well reflect developments of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁷² Nevertheless, what it describes may not be so very far from earlier English circumstances and at the least it can be a source of questions and a useful basis for speculation. First, it emphasizes the importance of the connections between the royal court and the provinces. Asser's account of *ministri nobilissimi*, serving at court on a rota, one month on and two months off, indicates how Alfred could have maintained such connections.⁷³ This is a reminder of the interest for students of the English court of tenures in serjeanty. These tenures are directly known from surveys of the thirteenth century and later. They relate to the tenure of land for some particular service, sometimes administrative or military, sometimes in the royal household. It was established by J. H. Round, and recently by R. R. Darlington, that some of these tenures, particularly some of those associated with the royal court or administration, were at least as old as the reign of Edward the Confessor.⁷⁴ There is nothing here which is precisely linked to what we are told about thirteenth-century Norway but two general points arise. First we see the institutionalized connection between court and country; secondly the possible significance of the court as a means of social mobility. It is well known that in eleventh-

⁶⁸ *The King's Mirror*, ed. and trans. by Larson, chapter xxvii.

⁶⁹ *The King's Mirror*, ed. and trans. by Larson, chapter xxiv. For other possible echoes of Anglo-Saxon circumstances in this work, see Larson, 'The Household of the Norwegian Kings', pp. 463–64 and 466.

⁷⁰ *The King's Mirror*, ed. and trans. by Larson, chapter xxvii.

⁷¹ *The King's Mirror*, ed. and trans. by Larson, chapter xxvii.

⁷² Musset, *Les pays scandinaves*, pp. 109–10, 177, and 201.

⁷³ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 100, pp. 86–87.

⁷⁴ Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies', pp. 210–13.

century England rise in social status, for example, to that of thegn, was considered as possible. A key text here is a compilation on status, probably 1002 x 1023. It lists the criteria by which a ceorl might prosper to the status of a thegn: possession of five hides of land, a bell and a castle-gate, and 'a seat and special office in the king's hall'.⁷⁵ Set this beside the serjeanty tenures in Wiltshire by the service of serving as an usher in the king's hall.⁷⁶ The Norwegian tract's emphasis on the ways in which service in the royal court might be a means to social promotion is relevant here. The royal court was too complex an institution for a brief paper touching on its history over many centuries to pretend to offer more than glimpses and gleanings. The attempt to illuminate that court by the use of a ninth-century Carolingian source or a thirteenth-century Norwegian one must have an element of desperation. However, grant that our knowledge is a matter of more or less detailed fragments and that the gaps in it are desperately wide. How are we to find some plausible basis for understanding what was very probably a complex organization except by looking for hypothetical parallels, better-described and even possibly connected parallels, elsewhere in western Europe.

⁷⁵ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by F. Liebermann, 3 vols in 4 (Halle, 1898–1916), I, 456.

⁷⁶ Campbell, 'Some Agents and Agencies', p. 212.

Wrestling with Hercules: King Alfred and the Classical Past

SUSAN IRVINE

In this essay I wish to examine the representation of Hercules in literature written mainly at the court of King Alfred towards the end of the ninth century; by relating this representation to other depictions of Hercules in Anglo-Saxon England and the Carolingian Empire, I hope to show that it has significant implications for the concept of kingship at the Alfredian court.

The court culture that prevailed in late-ninth-century England created a fertile environment for the literary reinterpretation of classical material. As Ruth Morse points out, there existed throughout the Middle Ages a close symbiosis between court culture and the revival of classical learning. She writes:

Demands for vernacular versions of Latin texts appear wherever court culture creates a class of potential readers who need—or want—knowledge enshrined in the traditions of Antiquity; for their various reasons, courts recreate, or perhaps give additional impetus to, the conversation with the classical past which increases the number of readings and interpretations of its texts.¹

The court of Alfred the Great was no exception. One of Alfred's most important conversations with the classical past began with Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*, a work which according to manuscript evidence probably came indirectly to Anglo-Saxon England from Italy via the Carolingian Empire.² It was translated into Old English by

¹ Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 214.

² Jacqueline Beaumont, 'The Latin Tradition of the *De Consolacione Philosophiae*', in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. by Margaret Gibson (Oxford, 1981), pp. 278–305 (p. 279).

Alfred at the end of the ninth century, as one element in his scheme of making available in the vernacular 'sumæ bec, ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiottonne'.³ This translation contains some of the most fascinating renderings of stories from classical mythology found in Anglo-Saxon literature, and it provides a starting point for my examination of the figure of Hercules in literature written at Alfred's court.

There are two references to Hercules by name in Alfred's translation of Boethius. Although on both occasions the Boethian original prompts the reference, Alfred has by no means stayed close to his source. It is the intriguing ways in which Alfred has expanded his source that will be my focus here.

The first allusion to Hercules is in Alfred's chapter 16, where, like his source, he is illustrating how each man is liable to suffer the hardships he imposes on others. The murderous practices and eventual comeuppance of the tyrant Busiris provide Alfred's first exemplum:

We leornodon eac be ðæm wælreowan Bosiridem, se wæs on Egyptum. Ðæs leodhatan gewuna wæs þæt he wolde ælne cuman swiðe arlice underfoon and swiðe swæsllice wið gebærnan, ðonne he æresð him to com. Ac eft, ær he him from cerde, he sceolde bion ofslaegen. Ond ða geberede hit ðæt Erculus Iobes sunu com to him. Þa wolde he don ymbe hine swa swa he ymbe manigne cuman ar dyde; wolde hine adrenan on þære ea ðe Nilus hatte. Ða wearð he strengra, and adrencte hine swiðe rihte be Godes dome, swa swa he manigne oðerne ær dyde.⁴

Here Alfred is translating a passage in Book II, pr. 6, of *De consolatione philosophiae*: 'Busiridem accepimus necare hospites solitum ab Hercule hospite fuisse mactatum'.⁵ The succinctness of Boethius's allusion contrasts with Alfred's more extended account.

³ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. by Henry Sweet, EETS, OS, 45 and 50 (London, 1871; repr. New York, 1958), p. 7; trans.: 'certain books which are most necessary for all men to know'. Translations of Old English are my own.

⁴ *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolacione Philosophiae*, ed. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899), pp. 36–37 (abbreviations expanded and editorial markings omitted); trans.: 'We have also learned about cruel Bosiris the Egyptian. This tyrant's practice was that he would receive each visitor very honourably and behave very graciously towards him when he first arrived. But then, before he departed, he would be killed. And then it happened that Hercules son of Jove came to him. Then he wished to act towards him as he had acted towards many a visitor; he wished to drown him in the river Nile. Then he [Hercules] was the stronger and drowned him very rightly in God's judgement, just as he had done to many others.'

⁵ *Anicci Manlii Severini Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Ludwig Bieler, CCSL, 94 (Turnhout, 1957), p. 30. For a literal translation, see *Boethius, The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library, 74 (Cambridge, MA, 1978), p. 211: 'We read that Busiris used to murder his guests, and that he himself was killed by his guest Hercules.'

The extra information that Alfred has provided—Busiris's Egyptian nationality, Hercules' genealogy, the method of drowning in the Nile used by both Busiris and Hercules—raises questions concerning the availability of source material and the factors underlying such amplification.

The question of how far Alfred had primary knowledge of classical material and how far he relied on commentaries for providing extra information has been the subject of much scholarly research since Georg Schepss first linked a commentary by Remigius of Auxerre with Alfred's translation in 1895.⁶ For the Busiris and Hercules episode, Janet Bately has examined in some detail why Alfred may have adapted the material in the way he did. The Boethian commentaries are unhelpful: the only detail corresponding to Alfred's is Remigius's location of Busiris's kingdom in Egypt.⁷ Alfred, Bately suggests, may have known a version of the story found in Hyginus and Servius, in which Busiris, identified as the son of Neptune, is described as performing human sacrifice in order to end a nine-year drought in Egypt.⁸ Bately compares this to an entry in the commentary on Orosius's *Historiarum aduersus paganos libri septem* (to which some versions of the Boethian commentaries refer), where Busiris, King of Egypt, is described as sacrificing his guests to his lord Neptune, until Hercules succeeds in drowning him in the Nile.⁹

In expanding Boethius's classical allusions in this way, it is clear that Alfred had in mind an audience who were not sufficiently informed to pick them up for themselves.¹⁰ For my purposes, however, it is not so much the source(s) of the extra mythological details supplied by Alfred that is of interest here as the attitude Alfred displays towards the material. His identification of Hercules as 'son of Jove' places Hercules firmly within the realm of classical mythology, and yet Alfred describes his action as receiving

⁶ Georg Schepss, 'Zu König Alfreds Boethius', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 94 (1895), 149–60. See also Kurt Otten, *König Alfreds Boethius* (Tübingen, 1964), Brian S. Donaghey, 'The Sources of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*', *Anglia*, 82 (1964), 23–57, and Joseph S. Wittig, 'King Alfred's *Boethius* and Its Latin Sources: A Reconsideration', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 157–98.

⁷ Janet Bately, 'Those Books That Are Most Necessary for All Men to Know: The Classics and Late Ninth-Century England, A Reappraisal', in *The Classics in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Aldo S. Bernardo and Saul Levin, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 69 (Binghamton, NY, 1990), pp. 45–78 (p. 54 and n. 74).

⁸ Hyginus, *Fabulae*, ed. by H. I. Rose (Leiden, 1934), 56, and *Servii Grammatici qui Feruntur in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, ed. by G. Thilo and H. Hagen (Leipzig, 1881; repr. Hildesheim, 1961), *Georgics* 3.5.

⁹ Bately, 'Those Books', p. 54 and n. 76.

¹⁰ See, for example, Janet M. Bately, 'Evidence for Knowledge of Latin Literature in Old English', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Kalamazoo, 1986), pp. 35–51 (p. 42): 'The evidence of Alfred's works is that his classical knowledge was fairly limited and that he expected some at least of his audience to know even less.'

divine approbation, ‘swiðe rihte be Godes dome’. The meaning of *dome* here is slightly ambiguous: Sedgefield’s translation of the phrase as ‘very rightly and by God’s will’ links Hercules’ action and God’s control more forcefully than my more cautious translation ‘very rightly in God’s judgement’.¹¹ What is clear from either translation is that Alfred is anxious to emphasize the morally positive force that Hercules represents.

This independent moral judgement on Alfred’s part is rather different from the generalizing moral truths that Alfred, following Boethius, draws from mythological stories such as Jove and the giants, Orpheus and Eurydice, and Ulysses and Circe. Whereas these stories are told not ‘for ðara leasesa spella lufan, ac forðæmðe we woldon mid gebecnan þa soðfæstnesse, and woldon ðæt hit wurde to nyttē ðam geherendum’,¹² Alfred tells the story of Hercules and Busiris as if it should be taken literally on its own terms. He interprets Hercules’ action as ‘true’ rather than ‘false’ according to his definition of these words. After recounting his version of the story of Jove and the giants to which Boethius briefly alluded, Alfred explains: ‘Dyllica leasesunga hi worhton, and meahton eaðe seggan soðspell, gif him þa leasesunga næren swetran, and þeah swiðe gelic ðisum.’¹³ Alfred then proceeds independently of his sources to tell the story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel as an example of a *soðspell*, a story in which, ‘swa hit cynn was’ (‘as was fitting’), the Tower is destroyed by divine power before it can be completed. Despite its mythological status, the story of Busiris and Hercules seems to carry for Alfred the force of a ‘true story’ in which God’s role can be explicitly seen.

The second passage in which Alfred refers to Hercules by name occurs in chapter 39 as a simile exemplifying how discussion always engenders more questions than it answers:

Swa swa mon on ealdspellum sægð þæt an nædre wäre þe hæfde nigon heafdu, and symle gif mon anra hwelc of aslog, þonne weoxon þær siofon on ðæm anum heafde. Þa geberede hit þær com se foremæra Erculus to, se wæs Iobes sunu; þa ne meahte he geþencan hu he hi mid ænige cræfte ofercuman sceolde, ær he hi bewæg mid wuda utan and forbærnde þa mid fyre. Swa is ðissem spræce þe þu me æfter assast; uneaðe hire cymð ænig mon of, gif he ærest an cemð; ne cymð he næfre to openum ende, buton he hæbbe swa scearp andgit swaðær fyr.¹⁴

¹¹ *King Alfred’s Version of the Consolations of Boethius Done into Modern English, with an Introduction*, trans. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford, 1900), p. 37.

¹² *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 101; trans.: ‘for love of those false stories, but because we wish to signify the truth with them, and wish it to be of use to listeners’.

¹³ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 99; trans.: ‘Such were the false stories they made up, and they could easily have told true stories, if the false ones had not been sweeter to them, and yet very like these.’

¹⁴ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 127; trans.: ‘just as it is told in old stories that there was a serpent which had nine heads, and whenever one of them was struck off, then seven grew on that one head. Then it happened that the famous Hercules, son of Jove, came there; then he could not work out how he could overcome it by any skill, until he surrounded it

Again Alfred has expanded his Boethian source, this time from Book IV, pr. 6: ‘Talis namque materia est ut una dubitatione succisa innumerabiles aliae uelut hydrae capita succrescant; nec ullus fuerit modus nisi quis eas uiuacissimo mentis igne coherceat.’¹⁵ Alfred has added a series of details to Boethius’s allusion: that the Hydra had nine heads, then seven more for each one that was struck off; that Hercules, son of Jove, defeated the Hydra; that he achieved this by surrounding it with wood before burning it. The information on the role of Hercules and the use of fire Alfred could have transferred from *De consolatione philosophiae* Book IV, m. 7, a passage which Alfred omits when he reaches that point in his translation.¹⁶ The nine heads (as opposed to fifty or a hundred elsewhere) Janet Bately traces to the accounts by Hyginus and Isidore.¹⁷ In Isidore and Hyginus, however, the number for the replacement heads is given as three rather than seven; the figure seven, as Bately shows, may well be due to ‘careless copying’.¹⁸ No precedent for the encirclement of the Hydra with wood has been identified.

One other feature distinguishes Alfred’s version from its Boethian source and that is the explicitly favourable representation of Hercules: his introduction as ‘se foremæra Erculus’ sets the tone for the passage. As with the Hercules and Busiris episode examined above, although Boethius is not himself hostile to Hercules, what is striking is the need Alfred feels to emphasize his own approbatory attitude towards him. With this in mind, underlying linguistic echoes in this passage take on a particular significance. Alfred, I would argue, is presenting Hercules as a kind of prototype of himself. This implicit connection seems to me to be developed in a variety of ways. First the concept of a task which requires a combination of *cræft* and the appropriate tools for its successful execution is exactly how Alfred envisages his own role as king elsewhere in a passage on the means of government which he added to Boethius: ‘Hwæt, þu wast þæt nan mon ne mæg nænne cræft cyðan ne nænne anweald reccan ne stioran butun to lum and andweorce.’¹⁹ Hercules requires the wood and fire to show his own *cræft* in killing

with wood and then burned it with fire. Thus it is with this subject which you ask me about; if someone embarks on it then he leaves it with difficulty; he never comes to a clear conclusion unless he has an understanding as keen as fire.’

¹⁵ *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, pp. 78–79; trans. *Boethius*, ed. by Stewart, p. 357: ‘It is such a kind of matter that, when one doubt is cut away, innumerable others grow in its place, like the heads of the Hydra; nor would there be any limit to them, if one did not repress them with the most lively fire of one’s mind.’

¹⁶ See *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, p. 87: ‘Herculem duri celebrant labores: [...] Hydra combusto perierit uenenō’; trans. *Boethius*, ed. by Stewart, p. 381: ‘Harsh labours make the fame of Hercules. [...] Its poison burnt, the Hydra died.’

¹⁷ Bately, ‘Those Books’, p. 52 and n. 58.

¹⁸ Bately, ‘Those Books’, p. 53.

¹⁹ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 40; trans.: ‘Indeed you know that no one can show any skill nor direct and administer any authority without tools and resources.’

the serpent. The application of the word *cræft* with reference to Hercules is fascinating given the significance that Alfred attaches to this word elsewhere. Occurring some 155 times in Alfred's translations, it is used by him, as Clemoes argues, 'to render Latin *virtus* in the moral sense of "virtue"'.²⁰ Citing the means of government passage from which I just quoted, Clemoes defines a *cræft* in Alfred's morality as 'a talent to serve a moral purpose and its *sine qua non* was the wisdom to understand the appropriate end and to render the talent effective accordingly'.²¹ Hercules, like Alfred, demonstrates just this kind of *cræft*.

The *cræft* that Hercules displays is linked by Alfred with the image 'swa scearp andgit swaðær fyr'. Boethius's static image of the need to repress doubts 'uiuacissimo mentis igne' ('with the most lively fire of one's mind'), in which the mind and the fire which destroyed the Hydra are one and the same, is transmuted by Alfred to a sequential process exemplifying how through careful thought one can reach a conclusion on a topic if one has an intellect as keen as fire. Hercules is able to reach the 'openum ende', both literally and metaphorically, owing to the keenness of his intellect. Alfred has chosen to emphasize Hercules' skill in finding a method to defeat the Hydra rather than the method itself. The two coalesce fittingly in the final image of 'swa scearp andgit swaðær fyr'.

Moreover, Alfred here is implicitly connecting Hercules' sharp intellect with his own. Whereas in Boethius the allusion applies in a general way to difficult subjects, Alfred emphasizes its particular relevance to the discussion in hand: 'Swa is ðisse spræce þe þu me æfter acast.' This subject, Alfred continues, is a particularly difficult one for anyone ('ænig mon') who embarks upon it to settle, and only a keen understanding (like his own, by implication) will succeed in reaching a clear conclusion. Hercules' fiery intellect becomes Alfred's as well. Given the underlying links in this passage between Alfred and Hercules, it is even tempting to connect the wood used by Hercules to defeat the Hydra with the metaphor of gathering wood which Alfred applies to his own translation of books from a variety of sources in the Preface to his Old English rendering of Augustine's *Soliloquia*.²²

Cf. also p. 30: 'Gif þu [...] þa nydþearfe witan wille, þonne is þæt mete and drync and claðas and tol to swelcum cræfte swelce þu cunne þæt þe is gecynde and þæt þe is riht to habbenne'; trans.: 'If you [...] wish to know what is necessary, it is food, drink, clothes, and tools for the skills which you know are fitting for you and right for you to have.'

²⁰ Peter Clemoes, 'King Alfred's Debt to Vernacular Poetry: The Evidence of *ellen* and *cræft*', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Korhammer with the assistance of Karl Reichl and Hans Sauer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 213–38 (p. 224). See also Nicole Guenther Discenza, 'Power, Skill and Virtue in the Old English *Boethius*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1977), 81–108.

²¹ Clemoes, 'King Alfred's Debt', p. 230.

²² *King Alfred's Version of St Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. by Thomas A. Carnicelli (Cambridge, MA, 1969), p. 47.

Curiously, given the enthusiastic representation of Hercules in the two episodes I have hitherto examined, Alfred omits Boethius's third, final, and longest allusion to Hercules. Book IV, m. 7 of *De consolatione philosophiae* consists of a series of allusions to classical mythology: Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, Ulysses' killing of Polyphemus, and some of the labours of Hercules. The metre ends with a generalizing conclusion:

Ite nunc, fortis, ubi celsa magni
ducit exempli uia. Cur inertes
terga nudatis? Superata tellus
sidera donat.²³

Alfred ignores the mythological allusions but retains and expands the generalizing conclusion within his chapter 40:

Wella, wisan men, wel; gað ealle on þone weg þe eow lærað þa foremæran bisna þara godena gumena and þara weorðgeornena wera þe ær eow wæron. Eala, ge eargan and idelgeornan; hwy ge swa unnytte sien and swa aswundne? Hwy ge nyllen ascian æfter þæm wisum monnum and æfter þæm weorðgeornum, hwylce hi wæron þa þe ær eow wæron? And hwy ge þonne nyllen, siððan ge hiora þeawas geascod hæbbæn, him onhirian, swa ge swiðost mægen? Forðæm hi wunnon æfter weorðscipe on pisse worulde, and tiolodon goodes hlisan mid goodum weorcum, and worhton goode bisne þæm þe æfter him wæron. Forðæm hi wuniað nu ofer ðæm tunglum on ecre eadignesse for hiora godum weorcum.²⁴

When Alfred came to render his prose version of Boethius's metres into verse, this passage remained as prose—unsurprisingly given how much of the original metre has been omitted. But the passage is remarkably rhythmic and alliterative, almost presaging Ælfric's much more systematic alliterative prose style a century later. Note how often two-stress phrases recur: *þara godena gumena, þara weorðgeornena wera, ge eargan and idelgeornan, wunnon æfter weorðscipe, goodes hlisan, mid goodum weorcum, on ecre eadignesse, for hiora godum weorcum*. Note how often these phrases alliterate, and also how the whole passage is built around the alliteration of the letters *g* and *w*. Note

²³ *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, p. 88; trans., *Boethius*, ed. by Stewart, p. 383: 'Go then, you brave, where leads the lofty path / Of this great example. Why in indolence / Do you turn your backs in flight? Earth overcome / Grants you the stars.'

²⁴ *King Alfred's Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 139; trans.: 'Oh wise men, go, all of you, on the path which the famous examples of the good men and of those eager for honour who preceded you teach you. Alas, you idle and lazy men; why are you so useless and sluggish? Why won't you inquire after the wise men and the ones eager for honour, to see what those who preceded you were like? And then, after you have learned their practices, why won't you imitate them as best you can? For they strove after honour in this world, and aimed for a good reputation through good deeds, and set a good example for those who followed them. Therefore, because of their good deeds, they now dwell above the stars in eternal bliss.'

too how particularly resonant words are repeated: *wis* (twice), *god* (five times, twice in the phrase *go(o)dum weorcum*), *weorð* (-*georn*, twice, -*scipe*, once). This is for Alfred a highly ornate passage which incorporates the essence of his interpretation of *De consolatione philosophiae*: good deeds in this world bring earthly honour as well as heavenly bliss.

Given that Alfred, as Roberta Frank notes, is ‘quick to insert commentary material having to do with classical myths’,²⁵ and given also that the commentaries have no shortage of material on the various Labours of Hercules alluded to here,²⁶ Alfred’s omission of this passage needs some explanation. Various theories, all plausible on their own terms, have been proposed for Alfred’s exclusion of the mythological material preceding this passage. Practical considerations certainly can not be ruled out, and Alfred was coming to the end of a lengthy undertaking. For Brian Donaghey the reason for the omission is ‘irrelevance, or a sense that they would take too long to explain to his audience’.²⁷ Janet Bately ascribes the omission to ‘editorial responsibility’, adding that ‘since Alfred’s wise men “wuniað nu ofer ðæm tunglum on ecre eadignesse for hiora godum weorcum” [...] it is not surprising that the king does not choose to refer to either Agamemnon, slayer of Iphigenia, or Ulysses, blinder of the Cyclops, or Hercules’.²⁸

But I suggest further that a distinction made by Boethius in the preceding prose section of his work (Book IV, pr. 7) accounts for Alfred’s omission of so much of the corresponding metre. In Book IV, pr. 7, the *vir sapiens* is compared by Boethius with the *virum fortem*.²⁹ Each of these, according to Boethius, has a different aim in mind: for the wise man it is that of *conformandae sapientiae* (further fashioning his wisdom), for the brave man it is that of *gloriae propagandae* (increasing his glory), though both show *virtus* in achieving this. But in his verse, Boethius focuses on the *virum fortem* and ignores the *vir sapiens*: the mythological exploits all exemplify strength and bravery rather than wisdom and Boethius’s peroration exclusively addresses the brave (*Ite nunc fortis*).

Alfred too distinguishes the *wis mon* and *se hwata esne*.³⁰ But Alfred’s interest is pre-eminently in the former rather than the latter. Hence, Alfred states, just as the brave man’s *lof* will increase, so also will the *med* of the wise man. Alfred proceeds to explain why the wise man should welcome hardship: ‘Þi ne sceolde nan wis man wilnian seftes lifes, gif he ænigra cræfta recð oððe æniges weorðscipes her for weorulde oððe eces

²⁵ Roberta Frank, ‘The *Beowulf* Poet’s Sense of History’, in *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, 1982), pp. 53–65 (p. 59).

²⁶ See Diane K. Bolton, ‘The Study of the Consolation of Philosophy in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Archives d’histoires doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 44 (1977), 33–78 (pp. 70–78).

²⁷ Donaghey, ‘The Sources’, p. 41.

²⁸ Bately, ‘Those Books’, p. 52 and n. 52.

²⁹ *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, p. 86.

³⁰ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 138.

lifes æfter þisse weorulde.³¹ Here Alfred identifies the wise man's reward as virtue and honour in this world, and eternal life thereafter. Wisdom for Alfred is associated with worldly and eternal honour.³² For the rest of this passage Alfred continues to focus on the wise man rather than the brave. To follow a passage which dwells on the relationship between wisdom and honour with a series of exempla in which the defining characteristic is strength rather than wisdom must have seemed inappropriate to Alfred. In his rendering of Boethius's conclusion, Alfred addresses first and foremost the *wisan men*, not the *fortes*. For Alfred, the wise should follow the example of *para godena gumena* and of *para weorðgeornena wera*. The lazy and idle should seek to imitate not just *þaem wisum monnum* but also *þaem weorðgeornum*. Both these groups alike 'wunnon æfter weorðscipe on þisse worulde, and tiolodon goodes hlisan mid goodum weorcum, and worhton goode bisne þæm he æfter him wærón'. Honour and reputation in this world, Alfred emphasizes, are appropriate rewards for the wise. To allude to a series of mythological stories displaying feats of strength rather than wisdom might have diverted attention from Alfred's prime concern with the relationship between wisdom and honour so central to his ideology of Christian kingship. Alfred prefers to leave the exact identity of those worthy of imitation to his audience's imagination.

But why should Hercules not have been a self-evident emblem of wisdom and strength combined, given Alfred's representation of him in the two passages I examined earlier? I would argue that Alfred's representation of Hercules stands out from his own treatment of figures from classical mythology elsewhere, and also from other vernacular representations of Hercules in Old English literature. By omitting this passage in his translation, Alfred is able to circumvent the issue of Hercules' relationship to classical mythology as a whole.

Classical mythology was clearly problematic for Alfred. Alfred generally displays an ambivalence of attitude towards the classics which is not reflected in the passages on Hercules.³³ In each of his most extended mythological accounts—Jove and the giants, Orpheus and Eurydice, and Ulysses and Circe—he explicitly designates the myths as 'false stories'.³⁴ Moreover in his telling of these stories Alfred cultivates a deliberate

³¹ *King Alfred's Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 138; trans.: 'Therefore no wise man should desire an easy life, if he cares about any virtues or any honour here in the world or about eternal life after this world.'

³² Compare the association of wealth and wisdom in Alfred's Preface to his translation of the *Cura Pastoralis*; see T. A. Shippey, 'Wealth and Wisdom in King Alfred's *Preface* to the Old English *Pastoral Care*', *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 346–55, and Paul E. Szarmach, 'The Meaning of Alfred's *Preface to the Pastoral Care*', *Mediaevalia*, 6 (1982 for 1980), 57–86.

³³ For evidence of the same ambivalence in Anglo-Saxon England generally, see Michael Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 29–50.

³⁴ See *King Alfred's Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, pp. 98–99 (on *ealdum leasum spellum, leasunga* (twice)), pp. 101–03 (*para leasesa spella, of ealdum leasum spellum, ðas*

detachment from their contents. This manifests itself most obviously in his use in all three of the *sculan* + infinitive constructions to convey the idea that ‘a statement is reported or is not vouched for by the speaker’.³⁵ Thirdly, in his version of the Ulysses and Circe story, Alfred presents a euhemeristic explanation of the pagan gods in order to deny their supposed superhuman status:³⁶

þa wæs þær Apollines dohtor Iobes suna; se Iob was hiora cyning, and licette þæt he sceolde bion se hehsta god; and þæt dysige folc him gelyfde, forþamðe he was cynecynnes; and hi nyston nænne oðerne god on þæne timan, buton hiora cyninges hi weorþodon for godas.³⁷

The so-called pagan gods were to be understood as mortal kings who had come to be falsely worshipped as gods.

Alfred takes pains to stress that he uses these false myths because moral truths can be understood through them.³⁸ Alfred’s moralizing conclusions derive from Boethius’s interpretations. But Alfred expands Boethius considerably, making his imagery more morally explicit, often in Christian terms. Hence the expanded narratives of Jove and the giants, and its counterpart Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, explicitly exemplify the futility of struggling against *ðæm godcundan anwalde*.³⁹ In his conclusion to the Orpheus and Eurydice episode Alfred explicitly interprets the looking back towards the Tartarean cave as man returning to his sins, and also independently allows for Christian grace and forgiveness (‘buton he hit eft gebete’).⁴⁰ The conclusion to the Ulysses and

leasan spell), pp. 115–16 (of *ealdum leasum spellum, leasan men* (the classical authors), *þa menn þe ðisum leasungum gelefdon*).

³⁵ Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1985), II, 60, §2037.

³⁶ On euhemerism, see John Daniel Cooke, ‘Euhemerism: A Mediaeval Interpretation of Classical Paganism’, *Speculum*, 2 (1927), 396–410; Robert J. Menner, ‘Two Notes on Mediaeval Euhemerism’, *Speculum*, 3 (1928), 246–48; Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, trans. by Barbara F. Sessions, Bollingen Series, 38 (Princeton, 1953); David F. Johnson, ‘Euhemerisation Versus Demonisation: The Pagan Gods and Ælfric’s *De Falsis Diis*’, in *Pagans and Christians: The Interplay between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by T. Hofstra, L. A. J. R. Houwen, and A. A. MacDonald, *Germania Latina*, 2 (Groningen, 1995), pp. 35–69.

³⁷ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 115; trans.: ‘The daughter of Apollo son of Jove was there; Jove was their king, and pretended that he was the highest god; and the foolish people believed him, because he was of royal race; and they did not know any other god at that time, except that they worshipped their kings as gods.’

³⁸ See, for example, *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 101.

³⁹ *King Alfred’s Old English Version*, ed. by Sedgefield, p. 99.

⁴⁰ See Wittig, ‘King Alfred’s Boethius’, pp. 168–69.

Circe story shares with Boethius the figurative interpretation that the mind is capable of resisting the body. But Alfred expands Boethius to suggest that although the body's illness can not affect the mind, the mind's vices do affect the behaviour of the body. In my 'Ulysses and Circe in Alfred's *Boethius*: A Classical Myth Transformed', I argue that Alfred's unusual and apparently unprecedented treatment of the Ulysses and Circe myth arose from his pejorative interpretation of Ulysses as a king who abuses his royal responsibilities.⁴¹ Ulysses, though not turned into an animal like his men, 'is shown to have suffered a worse fate, since his mind has succumbed to evil desires [...]. For Alfred, Ulysses is an example of a man who resembles swine in all but appearance'.⁴² Hence in his moralizing conclusion, Alfred follows Boethius in contrasting physical bestiality with the more harmful spiritual bestiality, but only Alfred has the underlying implication that Ulysses, in contrast to his men, is guilty of spiritual bestiality.

The type of interpretation which I would argue is evident in Alfred's treatment of the Ulysses and Circe story suggests that Alfred sees the classical myths working on not only a figurative level but also on a more literal one. It is to this more literal level, I would argue, that Alfred's allusions to Hercules belong. But Alfred's hostile attitude to Ulysses contrasts strongly with his favourable attitude to Hercules. What might have prompted Alfred to abandon his normally wary attitude towards the classical past in the two episodes concerning Hercules (where he neither alludes to 'false stories' nor uses the *sculan* + infinitive construction) and to present Hercules in such a way as to imply links between himself and Hercules?

The literary representation of Hercules available in Anglo-Saxon England offers a mixed response to this figure. Evidence from late Old English writers suggests that by c. AD 1000 Hercules had come to epitomize the unacceptable lifestyle of the classical gods: Ælfric, for example, refers to him as *pam hetelan ercule* ('the hateful Hercules') and *pam ormætan ente be ealle acwealde his nehgeburas* ('the immense giant who killed all his neighbours').⁴³ But authors contemporary with or earlier than Alfred showed a more ambivalent response. One of the most interesting comparisons to be

⁴¹ Susan Irvine, 'Ulysses and Circe in King Alfred's *Boethius*: A Classical Myth Transformed', in *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt wisely': Papers in Honour of E. G. Stanley*, ed. by M. J. Toswell and E. M. Tyler (London, 1996), pp. 387–401. On the literary tradition of the Ulysses and Circe story and Alfred's relationship to it, see also K. Grinda, 'Zu Tradition und Gestaltung des Kirke-Mythos in König Alfreds *Boethius*', in *Motive und Themen in englischsprachiger Literatur als Indikatoren literaturgeschichtlicher Prozesse: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Theodor Wolpers*, ed. by Heinz-Joachim Müllenbrock and Alfons Klein (Tübingen, 1990), pp. 1–23.

⁴² Irvine, 'Ulysses and Circe', p. 395.

⁴³ Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 4 vols, EETS, OS, 76, 82, 94, and 114 (London, 1881–1900; repr. as 2 vols, 1966), II, 384, lines 112–14. Compare *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*, ed. by Arthur S. Napier (Berlin, 1883), no. xlvi, p. 197, line 18.

made is with the allusions to Hercules in the Old English translation of Orosius's *Historiarum aduersus paganos libri septem*. This translation, though not now thought to be by Alfred himself and probably not a work of which he had direct knowledge, was undertaken as part of his educational plan.⁴⁴ Hercules makes two appearances in the Old English *Orosius*. The first, in Book I, describes how Hercules was called upon to defeat the Amazons; despite killing many of them, he was unable to deprive them of their territory.⁴⁵ In the second (Book III), Alexander attempts (successfully, but with great carnage) to outdo Hercules by capturing a particular Indian city which an earthquake had prevented Hercules from attacking.⁴⁶ In both these passages Hercules is identified as *se ent* ('the giant'), an epithet independent of the poem's source.⁴⁷ The exact implications of the epithet in this context are not easy to determine. For P. J. Frankis, the word 'presumably constitutes a commentary explaining that Hercules was an ancient hero of superhuman stature'.⁴⁸ The only other use of *ent* in the translation, however, suggests that the translator may have had a different meaning in mind. In Book II, the translator describes how Nimrod *se ent* first began to build Babylon.⁴⁹ The identification of Nimrod as a giant derives from two biblical passages: Genesis 6. 4 ('Gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis: postquam enim ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum, illaeque genuerunt, isti sunt potentes a saeculo viri famosi') and Genesis 10. 8–10 ('Porro Chus genuit Memrod: ipse coepit esse potens in terra, et erat robustus venator coram Domino [...] Fuit autem principium regni eius Babylon').⁵⁰ Since Babylon and Babel were viewed as one and the same, Nimrod became by legend the leader of a group of giants who tried to build a tower up to heaven but were thwarted by God who made their language incomprehensible to each other.⁵¹ If Nimrod qualified as an *ent* for the

⁴⁴ See Elizabeth M. Liggins, 'The Authorship of the OE *Orosius*', *Anglia*, 88 (1970), 289–322, and *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by Janet M. Bately, EETS, SS, 6 (London, 1980). *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 220, notes that 'we have no evidence that Alfred knew either Latin or Old English versions of Orosius' History'.

⁴⁵ *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 30, lines 12–20.

⁴⁶ *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 72, lines 5–12.

⁴⁷ *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 220 (note 30/15).

⁴⁸ P. J. Frankis, 'The Thematic Significance of *enta geweorc* and Related Imagery in *The Wanderer*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2 (1973), 253–69 (pp. 260–61). Bately cites a passage from Solinus which alludes to Hercules' great height; see *Old English Orosius*, p. 220 (note 30/15).

⁴⁹ *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 43, line 21.

⁵⁰ For biblical references, see *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by R. Weber (Stuttgart, 1969).

⁵¹ See Frankis, 'The Thematic Significance', p. 261, who identifies this form of the legend in 'Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XVI.4 and 11, and substantially, in Isidore's *Etymologiae*, XV.i.4 (with further references in VII.vi.22 and XIV.iii.12), and it was in this form that it was repeated by numerous writers, including the Anglo-Saxon Alcuin in his *Interrogationes Sigewulfi*.'

Orosius translator because his ancestry went back to the union between sons of God and daughters of men, then Hercules too, who was son of the god Jove and the human Alcmene, might have seemed an appropriate recipient of this title.⁵²

It is difficult to be sure exactly what attitude the *Orosius* translator is taking towards Hercules. *Se ent* does not necessarily carry pejorative overtones within its context here, and the portrayal of Hercules in the two passages is of an ambitious but not invincible opponent. In the second passage the huge loss of life inflicted by Alexander in his determination to outdo Hercules seems by implication to put Hercules into a more favourable light in comparison.

Other allusions to Hercules in literature possibly written in Anglo-Saxon England are more explicitly ambivalent. The *Liber monstrorum de diversis generibus* ('Book of monsters of various kinds') contains references to Hercules in each of its three main sections. This work, Michael Lapidge argues, was probably composed by an Anglo-Saxon author during the period AD 650–750.⁵³ Hercules appears in the first section as one of a series of monsters:

Quis Herculis fortitudinem et arma non miretur, qui in occiduis Tyrrheni maris faucibus columnas mirae magnitudinis ad humani generis spectaculum erexit, quique bellorum suorum tropaea in Oriente iuxta Oceanum Indicum ad posteritatis memoriam construxit, et postquam paene totum orbem cum bellis peragrasset et terram tanto sanguine maculauisset, sese moriturum flammis ad deuorandum inuoluit?⁵⁴

As Andy Orchard has noted, this account is 'distinctly ambiguous': the 'nicely ambiguous' Latin (*quis [...] non miretur*) could be interpreted as 'who does not wonder at' rather than 'who does not admire', the monuments look like 'sand-castles to pride', the blood and battle essential to heroic endeavour are impugned, and the flames at the end might suggest hell-fire.⁵⁵ But if Hercules is the monster here, elsewhere he is rather the destroyer of monsters: in the second section the *Liber monstrorum* author mentions his

⁵² *Old English Orosius*, ed. by Bately, p. 220 (note 30/15), comments that Hercules is identified as son of Jove and Alcmene, and is also given the title *heros* 'demi-god', in Servius's commentary on the *Aeneid*.

⁵³ Michael Lapidge, 'Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex', *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., 23 (1982), 151–92.

⁵⁴ Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 264 and 266; trans. pp. 265 and 267: 'Who does not admire the courage and weaponry of Hercules, who, at the western entrance to the Mediterranean, erected pillars of an amazing size as a spectacle for the human race, and who constructed trophies of his wars in the East by the Indian Ocean, as a memorial for posterity, and afterwards travelled in battles through almost the entire world, and spattered the earth with so much blood, and at the point of death wrapped himself in flames to be consumed?'

⁵⁵ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 114–15.

killing of an enormous lion under the rock of the Nemean mountain and emphatically rejects the legend that he dragged Cerberus away from the underworld and ‘eum inritatum [. . .] insanis prouocauit latratibus’ (‘provoked the enraged beast by mad barking’); in the third section Hercules is described in one passage as being helpless in a throng of hissing serpents, in another he is alluded to as the slayer of the Hydra, and finally his feat of strangling and crushing two snakes in his hand is celebrated.⁵⁶ One other incidental reference to Hercules in the second section alludes to the same episode as in Orosius: Alexander’s successful capture of the rock from which Hercules had had to retreat owing to an earthquake.⁵⁷

The ambivalence of attitude shown here towards Hercules reflects the varying attitudes towards him shown by the patristic fathers and commentators in the early medieval period. In comparison with Ulysses, as G. Karl Galinsky has noted, Hercules’ literary tradition lacks that ‘interplay of hostility and admiration’ which marks Ulysses’.⁵⁸ It is as the *exemplum virtutis* that Hercules most often appears in the Middle Ages. But the exact nature of the *virtutis* was not universally agreed. For some authors *virtus* encompassed not just physical but also moral strength. Servius, for example, in his fourth-century commentary on the *Aeneid*, pronounced Hercules to be *mente magis quam corpore fortis*, and the hero’s victory over Cerberus was explained allegorically as his victory over earthly vices.⁵⁹ The sixth-century Italian mythographer Fulgentius offered in his *Mitologiae* a more developed allegorical interpretation in which, for example, Antaeus represents lust, Cacus, evil incarnate, and Hercules, manly virtue and fortitude.⁶⁰ In the mid-ninth century Hrabanus Maurus and Remigius of Auxerre, drawing on Fulgentius, briefly allude to Hercules as the personification of virtue.⁶¹

Some patristic authors, on the other hand, contrasted Hercules’ physical strength with what they saw as his spiritual weakness.⁶² Lactantius, in his early-fourth-century *De divinis institutionibus*, shows an extremely hostile attitude towards the classical tradition

⁵⁶ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 290, 296, 306, and 314.

⁵⁷ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 292.

⁵⁸ G. Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1972), p. 187.

⁵⁹ *Servii Grammatici in Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, ed. by Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1923), II, 26–27 (6.123), 62 (6.395). This and similar examples are cited by Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme*, p. 190.

⁶⁰ Fulgentius, *Mitologiarum Libri Tres*, ed. by Richard Helm (Leipzig, 1898), 2.3–5.

⁶¹ Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo*, *PL*, 3, col. 430; Remigius of Auxerre, *Commentum in Martianum Capellam*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1962), I, 134.

⁶² See Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme*, pp. 188–89, and Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991), esp. chapter 4.

generally and Hercules in particular.⁶³ Augustine, in *De civitate Dei*, refers scathingly to the apparently arbitrary exaltation of Hercules: ‘Verum iste non fuerit uel, quod magis credendum est, non talis fuerit, qualis poetica uanitate describitur; nisi enim nimis accusaretur Cacus, parum Hercules laudaretur.’⁶⁴ In one of his sermons, Augustine is more explicitly hostile to Hercules, contrasting his physical strength unfavourably with the spiritual strength of Saint Agnes:

Contra unum infirmum et trementem omnibus membris senem christianum quid valet Hercules? Vicit Cacum, vicit Hercules leonem, vicit Hercules canem Cerberum: vicit Fructuosus totum mundum. Compara virum viro. Agnes puella tredecim annorum, vicit diabolum. Eum puella ista vicit, qui de Hercule multos decepit.⁶⁵

For these authors, each man’s salvation is dependent on the grace of God and certainly not on *virtus*.

Where does Alfred’s presentation of Hercules fit into this? Clearly Alfred, like his source Boethius, has interpreted Hercules in a positive light. But, as I have shown, Alfred is more emphatic than Boethius that Hercules is morally and intellectually, as well as physically, superior. Alfred may have had in mind the allegorical interpretations. But he may also have been aware of the more hostile patristic attitude to Hercules—even if he did not know *De civitate Dei*—and may have intended to counter such an exegesis. In either case, I believe that the reason for Alfred’s particular support of Hercules, given his own wariness of the classical material elsewhere and given the ambivalence of attitude towards Hercules in Latin and Old English literary tradition, lies elsewhere. I would like to argue that Alfred has in mind the role of Hercules as a prototype for the ideal Christian Roman ruler such as existed in the Carolingian Empire from the time of Charlemagne.

In putting forward this hypothesis, I wish to acknowledge the influence of Lawrence Nees’s work on representations of Hercules at the Carolingian court. But I would

⁶³ Lactantius, *Diuinae Institutiones*, ed. by Samuel Brandt, CSEL, 19 (Vienna, 1890), pp. 31–33 and 67–70.

⁶⁴ Sancti Aurelii Augustini *De Civitate Dei Libri XI–XXII*, ed. by Bernard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb, CCSL, 48 (Turnhout, 1955), XIX. 12. 677; Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. by Marcus Dods (New York, 1950), p. 688: ‘But he [Cacus] may have had no existence, or at least, he was not such as the poets fancifully describe him, for they had to exalt Hercules, and did so at the expense of Cacus.’

⁶⁵ Saint Augustine, *Sermo 273*, chapter 6, *PL*, 38, cols 1250–51; trans. by Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, p. 87: ‘In comparison to one weak Christian, trembling in all his [or her] members, what value has Hercules? He conquered Cacus, he conquered a lion, he conquered the dog Cerberus: [Saint] Fructuosus conquered the World. Compare one man to another. [Saint] Agnes, a girl of but thirteen years, conquered the devil. Thus that girl conquered he who, concerning Hercules, deceived many men.’

emphasize that the sophisticated motives which he attributes to the craftsmen, literary and artistic, whom he discusses may not have been appreciated by all contemporary audiences and spectators. And it seems to me that this might be particularly pertinent where a connection between the courts of two kingdoms, perhaps at second- or third-hand, is the issue; information passes back and forth but such information, like in a game of Chinese whispers, does not always represent faithfully the whole intent of its original.

Nees discusses the representation of Hercules in two works of art from the Carolingian era. The first is Theodulf of Orléans's *Contra iudices*, which includes an apparent description of a vase decorated with scenes from the Labours of Hercules.⁶⁶ Nees argues convincingly that this vase did not in fact exist and that Theodulf intended his description to be seen in a much wider perspective. Rather than presenting Hercules as a personification of virtue, Theodulf sees him as 'a hero whose virtue is ambiguous and tainted'. For Theodulf, pagan virtue and pagan justice 'are to be radically distinguished from Christian virtue and Christian justice'.⁶⁷ Nees relates Theodulf's representation of Hercules to the political context of the Carolingian Empire and more specifically of Charlemagne's imperial coronation: the poem, Nees argues, can be identified as a work directed to 'the problematic theory and reality of an *imperium Romanum Christianum*, a Christian Roman Empire'. Theodulf uses the poem to express his sense of 'the incompatibility of Christian Frankish kingship and the Roman Empire prior to ca. 798'.⁶⁸

Contemporaries of Theodulf were, however, much more supportive of the appropriateness of the Roman imperial tradition for Frankish kingship. One of these was Alcuin. In correspondence addressed to Charlemagne himself, Alcuin not only employed the term *imperium christianum*, but also used passages from the *Aeneid* to describe Charlemagne's imperial responsibilities.⁶⁹ Given Alcuin's support for a Christian *imperium* for Charlemagne, it clearly would have suited him to interpret Theodulf's poem rather differently if the opportunity had arisen. The assertion of a link between Hercules and Roman emperors was after all not unprecedented.⁷⁰

Charlemagne in the end did accept the Roman imperial title from the pope, albeit reluctantly according to his biographer Einhard.⁷¹ Theodulf went along with the coronation, and indeed won promotion on the back of it, and it would be possible to argue, I think, that he had expressed his opposition so tactfully and obliquely that many of his contemporaries, possibly including Alcuin, were unaware of it. The continuity of the Roman imperial tradition could be seen to have been upheld, and Hercules may not have

⁶⁶ *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Poet., 1 (Berlin, 1881), pp. 493–517. Cited by Nees (with trans.), *A Tainted Mantle*, pp. 21–22.

⁶⁷ Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, pp. 30 and 32.

⁶⁸ Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, pp. 114 and 118.

⁶⁹ See Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, pp. 114–23.

⁷⁰ Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme*, p. 188.

⁷¹ See Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, p. 127.

been considered such an unworthy precedent for Charlemagne as Theodulf's poem was intended to suggest.

Another later Carolingian work of art has Hercules as its theme: the Hercules ivories are a series of panels on a wooden *Cathedra Petri* depicting the Labours of Hercules, which Nees suggests might have been 'produced in reaction to Charles the Bald's assumption of the Roman imperial title in 875'.⁷² Arguing that Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, was the essential figure in the design and preparation of the Hercules ivories, Nees argues that the ivories 'fit well the conception of a negative exemplum for the Carolingian king, with Hercules being at best a highly ambivalent model, an apparently glorious but sharply circumscribed reflection of the king's proper character and duties, and at worst a warning of dangers to be overcome'.⁷³ Nees links these ivories with some pen drawings illustrating the Labours of Hercules which appear in Yale University Beinecke Library MS 413, a manuscript probably composed by Hincmar and presented to Charles the Bald.⁷⁴

For my purposes, the poem, the ivories, and the drawings all represent an association between Carolingian kingship and Hercules which might have passed by report from one court to another without the negative implications originally intended. It is well known that Alfred, in constructing his own kingdom, relied on Carolingian precedent. The various contacts J. M. Wallace-Hadrill traces between the two leads him 'to suspect Carolingian influence upon Alfred in almost every direction: military, liturgical, educational, literary, artistic'.⁷⁵ Janet Nelson, whilst stressing the differences that need to be recognized between Alfred and his Carolingian counterparts, accepts also the numerous parallels and outlines the 'ample opportunities [...] for the transmission back to Alfred's court of news, views, and food for thought'.⁷⁶ Various scholars have argued that the accounts of Alfred's childhood anointing as king in Rome by the pope show

⁷² Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, p. 235.

⁷³ Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, p. 167.

⁷⁴ Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, p. 241. See also Lawrence Nees, 'Unknown Carolingian Drawings of Hercules from the Scriptorium of Reims and the *Cathedra Petri* Ivories', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 46 (1988), 37–54.

⁷⁵ J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English in the Ninth Century: Some Common Historical Interests', in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 201–16 (p. 212).

⁷⁶ Janet L. Nelson, 'The Political Ideas of Alfred of Wessex', in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Anne J. Duggan (London, 1993), pp. 125–28 (p. 131). See also Nelson, 'A King Across the Sea': Alfred in Continental Perspective', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 36 (1986), 45–68, and Nelson, 'Wealth and Wisdom: The Politics of Alfred the Great', in *Kings and Kingship*, ed. by J. Rosenthal, State University of New York Acta, 11 (New York, 1986 for 1984), pp. 31–52.

Alfred, or his advisers, attempting to emulate the coronation of Carolingian rulers.⁷⁷ If Alfred knew that the figure of Hercules was linked with Carolingian kingship—and it seems to me that the level of contact makes it unlikely that he would not have heard at least of the Hercules ivories on the *Cathedra Petri*—then this might well have influenced his own representation of Hercules in his translation of Boethius, even encouraged him to have taken the opportunity to present Hercules in passing as almost a model for his own kingship.

I suggest then that Hercules for Alfred was a classical figure whose status differed significantly from other participants in ‘false stories’. Alfred not only shows him to be the stoic virtuous hero that Boethius presents, but also attributes to him a Christian morality and an intellectual vitality which make him a model appropriate for a king. Even in his dissemination of classical material, Alfred can be seen to propagate more than just learning. Articulating his political philosophy through the classical past, albeit discreetly and briefly, he undertakes his own self-imposed herculean task of succeeding in both war and wisdom.

⁷⁷ See, for example, Janet L. Nelson, ‘The Problem of King Alfred’s Royal Anointing’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 18 (1967), 145–63 (p. 162); Wallace-Hadrill, ‘The Franks and the English’, p. 212; and Alfred P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995), p. 16.

Persuasion and Invention at the Court of King Alfred the Great

DAVID PRATT

The observation is almost axiomatic that our image of Alfred as a remarkable and successful king depends largely upon texts emanating directly from his immediate scholarly circle.¹ In particular, the concerns of the king and his court emerge not only from the biography of Alfred by his scholarly helper Asser, but also, above all, from the writings attributed to the king himself. These comprise, in addition to the introduction to his law book, four vernacular translations, undertaken with varying degrees of faithfulness to their Latin originals: Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis*, Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae*, Augustine's *Soliloquia*, and the first fifty Psalms. Alfred himself acknowledges that he translated the *Regula pastoralis* at least with the aid of his scholarly helpers. There are good grounds for assuming, nevertheless, that it is Alfred's own voice which gives these texts their shared distinctive stylistic features, since four of the five contain attributions to Alfred of one form or another, and it is the concerns of a king, not a courtier, which leap from every page.² Alfred is thus indeed

¹ For the genesis of this approach, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English in the Ninth Century: Some Common Historical Interests', *History*, 35 (1950), 202–18 (pp. 216–17), reprinted in J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 201–16 (p. 213). In completing this piece, I would like to thank the following, all of whom have offered helpful advice at various stages of its preparation: Carol Farr, Anna Gannon, George Henderson, Simon Keynes, Rosamond McKitterick, Janet Nelson, Leslie Webster, and Patrick Wormald.

² Doubts over the extent of Alfred's personal input have recently been raised by M. R. Godden, 'The Player-King: Identification and Self-Representation in King Alfred's Writings', in *Alfred the Great: Proceedings of the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by T. Reuter (Aldershot, forthcoming); for a response, in which the case for considerable royal involvement is defended, see D. R. Pratt, 'Problems of Authorship and Audience in the Writings of King

‘the only secular western ruler between Marcus Aurelius and Alfonso the Wise of Castile whom we actually catch in the act of reading and writing about his job’.³ Being so highly unusual, the phenomenon of royal authorship poses particularly pressing questions of purpose and intended audience which are accordingly fundamental to our understanding of Alfred and his texts.

It is no coincidence, moreover, that similar questions are posed by the equally unprecedented corpus of artefacts associated with Alfred’s court. As Asser reveals, Alfred’s summoning of his scholarly helpers was matched by no less strenuous efforts to gather a body of skilled craftsmen at the West Saxon court, ‘assembled from many races’.⁴ This seems to be the first written Anglo-Saxon evidence for the existence of craftsmen formally attached to a royal court, an arrangement hitherto favoured by Carolingian rulers, although they also continued to patronize monastic ateliers. Once assembled, Alfred’s craftsmen served to stimulate and captivate his burgeoning creativity in a manner comparable to the influence of his learned scholars. Indeed, since Asser repeatedly stresses that Alfred’s craftsmen received their designs from the king himself, their three-dimensional products would seem to have functioned as a medium for royal self-expression no less significant than Alfred’s own translations. The possibility arises, therefore, that Alfred’s written texts and artistic commissions might have fulfilled related and complementary purposes, and that careful consideration of his recorded concerns might help to elucidate the meaning and function of his commissioned artefacts. To this end, it seems appropriate, first, to consider Alfred’s overall purposes in composing his texts before turning, secondly, to the corpus of Alfredian artefacts and their possible connections with the thought of the king himself.

The Revival of Wisdom

It is important to remember that Alfred had far more specific motives for his involvement in learning than the usual term ‘educational programme’ would immediately suggest. Rather, for Alfred, learning was an activity absolutely essential for those placed in positions of power, and especially kings. In a telling passage, Asser explains that in

Alfred the Great’, in *Learned Laity in the Carolingian Era*, ed. by Patrick Wormald (Cambridge, forthcoming).

³ Patrick Wormald, ‘The Ninth Century’, in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (Oxford, 1982), pp. 132–57 (p. 157).

⁴ For a further survey of Alfredian metalwork and artistic patronage, see now Leslie Webster, ‘*Aedificia nova: Treasures of Alfred’s Reign*’, in *Alfred the Great*, ed. by Reuter. *Asser’s Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of St Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson, new imp. (Oxford, 1959), c. 101, lines 4–7; cf. c. 76, lines 6–9, and c. 91, lines 19–21. All translations from Alfredian sources are my own; where appropriate I have consulted Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser’s Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth, 1983).

desiring wisdom all his life, Alfred resembles ‘Solomon [. . .] who initially, having despised all present glory and riches, requested wisdom from God, and yet acquired both, that is, wisdom *and* present glory’.⁵ This dream experienced by Solomon at Gibeon, in which God granted him undesired riches, wealth, and glory in return for his resolve to seek wisdom alone, had featured prominently at the court of Charles the Bald, and it was probably through Grimbald’s influence that it came to define for Alfred the fundamental nature of power and its role in the world.⁶ For example, Solomon’s dream, with all its baggage from the Sapiential books of the Old Testament, lies behind an important addition in Alfred’s version of the *Consolatio*, in which he explains when power (*anweald*) may be rightly held:

Study wisdom, and when you have learned it, do not reject it [cf. Proverbs 4. 5]. For I say to you without any doubt that you can come to power through wisdom, although you do not desire power. You need not care for power, nor strive after it. If you are wise and good, it will follow you, although you do not desire it.⁷

In pursuing wisdom so single-mindedly, therefore, Alfred was adopting the only attitude towards his power that could make it legitimate. Power was not there to be exploited, but rather held humbly, in accordance with the divine principles through which it had initially been acquired.

Alfred’s own compositions, and those vernacular texts commissioned by him, not only enabled the king himself to fulfil these ideals, however, but were also written with a view to instilling the love of wisdom in his ecclesiastical and secular officials. In the Prose Preface to his translation of Gregory’s *Regula pastoralis*, the *Hierdeboc*, Alfred supplies his bishops with a highly stylized history of wisdom among the English, based

⁵ *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 76, lines 44–48, p. 61.

⁶ Solomon’s dream is described in III Kings 3. 11–14 and II Chronicles 1. 7–12; cf. also Wisdom 7. 1–12. On the significance of Solomon’s dream at the court of Charles the Bald, see D. R. Pratt, ‘The Political Thought of Alfred the Great’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 1999), pp. 39–50 (publication forthcoming). On one particularly interesting citation of Solomon’s dream, by Sedulius Scottus in his *Liber de rectoribus christianis*, written for Charles the Bald in 869, see Anton Scharer, ‘The Writing of History at King Alfred’s Court’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 5 (1996), 177–206 (pp. 191–99). Cf. J. L. Nelson, ‘Wealth and Wisdom: The Politics of Alfred the Great’, in her *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe: Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Aldershot, 1999), II, 31–52 (p. 36): ‘the explicit linkage of wisdom and wealth was not a Carolingian commonplace. If Alfred borrowed it from Solomon, he did so directly and not through a Continental intermediary.’

⁷ *King Alfred’s Old English Version of Boethius: De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by Walter John Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899), XVI.i, p. 35, lines 18–24. Cf. *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Ludwig Bieler, CCSL, 94, 2nd edn (Turnhout, 1984), II. 6. 3, p. 30.

on the assumption, derived from Solomon's dream, that the love of wisdom will bring wealth and success. When Alfred beseeches his bishops to free themselves 'from worldly affairs so that you may apply that wisdom which God gave you wherever you can', he is asking them to follow the Solomonic track by which wisdom leads to undesired wealth, by reading the *Hierdeboec*.⁸ Similarly, Asser records how Alfred admonished the *imperitia* and *insipientia* of his judges, that is, his ealdormen, reeves, and thegns, commanding them either to live up to their names as wise men by pursuing *sapientia*, or to lose their offices of earthly power.⁹ Alfred's law-book, with its Mosaic introduction, would have provided his judges with entirely appropriate reading matter, since Solomon had asked God for wisdom in order to judge his people.¹⁰

This revival of wisdom was centred upon the royal court, which behaved more like a magnet for those required to pursue wisdom than as a base camp upon which further outlying outposts were to be modelled.¹¹ It was here, 'amid all the hindrances of this present life', that Alfred and his scholarly helpers, whom he counted among his 'true friends',¹² read books aloud to each other and set about translating them into English on the basis of their deep discussions. It was here that Alfred established his *schola*, the main beneficiaries of which, for all the talk in the Prose Preface of 'all the free-born young men now in England', seem to have been the children of his nobles, who were expected to master the liberal arts before acquiring the other aristocratic skills that would further enable them to serve the king in due course.¹³ It was also from court that Alfred's current officials seem to have received the English books necessary for their pursuit of wisdom, if indeed such books were not also being copied there. This view is confirmed by the remarkable analysis of the royal court that Alfred adds to his translation of Augustine. Alfred remarks that people seek the king's estate, or his assembly, or his army along different roads, whether long or short, easy or difficult, and enjoy differing degrees of favour with the king. He then likens his subjects' experiences

⁸ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. by Henry Sweet, EETS, OS, 45 and 50 (London, 1871), p. 4, lines 1–4. For an important analysis of these themes, see T. A. Shippey, 'Wealth and Wisdom in King Alfred's *Preface* to the Old English *Pastoral Care*', *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 346–55, who nonetheless overlooks their Solomonic inspiration.

⁹ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 106, lines 28–39, p. 93.

¹⁰ On the introduction to Alfred's law-book, see now Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, I: *Legislation and Its Limits* (Oxford, 1999), 416–29.

¹¹ For royal itinerary, see James Campell, 'Anglo-Saxon Courts', above.

¹² See R. Thomas, 'The Binding Force of Friendship in King Alfred's *Consolation and Soliloquies*', *Ball State University Forum*, 29.1 (1988), 5–20.

¹³ *Alfred's Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. by Sweet, p. 7, lines 6–15; cf. *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 75, lines 11–21, p. 58.

of his own royal lordship to the pursuit of *wisdom*, which, significantly, is a masculine word in Old English:

So also it is regarding wisdom: everyone who desires him and is eager for him can come to him and abide in his household and dwell in his company, yet some are nearer to him, some further from him, just as it is with the estates of every king; some live in the chamber, some in the hall, some on the threshing floor, some in prison; and yet they all live by the favour of one lord, just as all men live under one sun and by its light see what they see.¹⁴

For Alfred, and for his enthusiastic readers, therefore, the royal court had become the house of wisdom described in the Book of Proverbs, whose seven columns Alcuin had memorably interpreted as the seven liberal arts.¹⁵ Equally, Alfred's own learning made it credible for him to represent simultaneously both wisdom himself—that is, the divine lord who illuminates all with his light, like the sun—and also the wise King Solomon, to whom all the earth had come, like the Queen of Sheba, in order to hear his wisdom.¹⁶

Aside from this powerful imagery, however, Alfred's philosophical point here is equally revealing. Whereas Augustine was concerned with the ability of an intellectual elite to experience the ecstatic love of wisdom,¹⁷ Alfred is extending hope to all those who seek wisdom, regardless of their abilities. As Alfred adds a few pages later, 'enjoy the wisdom that you have, and rejoice in the part that you can understand, and strive eagerly after more'.¹⁸ That this pragmatic approach was entirely appropriate for one who had himself begun to study late in life highlights the extent to which both the plan to revive wisdom and its promotion were shaped by Alfred's own experiences. Alfred's

¹⁴ *King Alfred's Version of St Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. by Thomas A. Carnicelli (Cambridge, MA, 1969), p. 77, line 5, to p. 78, line 2 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by W. Hörmann, CSEL, 89 (Vienna, 1986), Bk I, XIII.23, p. 35, lines 3–5.

¹⁵ Proverbs 9. 1, cited by Alcuin in his *Disputatio de vera philosophia*, *PL*, 101, cols 853B–D. Cf. Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, lines 868–87, in *Prudentius*, ed. by H. J. Thomson, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1949–53), I, 340–41.

¹⁶ III Kings 4. 34 and 10. 24.

¹⁷ For example, 'REASON: Now we ask what sort of lover of wisdom you are. It is wisdom which you desire to see, as if naked, and to hold, with no veil between, with a most chaste view and embrace, in a way in which she only permits herself to be treated by her very few, most chosen lovers': *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, XIII.22, p. 34, lines 1–5. Cf. Alfred's re-interpretation of this section (*Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 75, line 19, to p. 77, line 4), discussed by Ruth Waterhouse, 'Tone in Alfred's Version of Augustine's *Soliloquies*', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany, NY, 1986), pp. 47–85 (pp. 68–71).

¹⁸ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 79, lines 22–24 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, XIV.25, p. 37, line 17, to p. 38, line 3.

plan does indeed seem to have developed from his own attempts to fulfil the Solomonic model, but Asser's sustained assertion that 'from the cradle onwards [...] it has been the desire for wisdom, more than anything else [...] which has characterized the nature of his noble mind' probably in part reflects the rhetoric current at court in the early 890s.¹⁹ Asser himself reports that Alfred identified as his greatest burden the fact that 'when he was of the right age and had the leisure and the capacity for learning, he did not have the teachers'.²⁰ One should compare this burden with the supposed sentiments of those judges either too old or too slow to learn to read who, according to Asser, 'considered the youth of the present day to be fortunate, who had the luck to be instructed in the liberal arts, but counted themselves unfortunate because they had not learned such things in their youth nor even in their old age, even though they ardently wished that they had been able to do so'.²¹ Thus whereas Alfred's current officials were expected to take heart from the king's own late start, their children were constantly exhorted to take advantage of the opportunity that had been denied both to their parents and to Alfred himself, despite his unceasing desire. This exhortation to follow the king's own example powerfully reinforced Alfred's coordinated efforts to persuade his nobles to acquire some comprehension at least of divine wisdom, however this might be achieved. It was the utility of comprehension, of course, that had led Alfred to promote the vernacular, rather than Latin, as the primary language of political and philosophical discourse. Similar thinking also lay behind his provision for the oral recitation of translated texts to his most intransigently illiterate noblemen, which was to take place, apparently, while they were in the comfort of their own homes.²²

The Alfred Jewel and Related Fittings

It is perhaps in this context that one should consider four items of Anglo-Saxon metalwork, each dating from the late ninth century and designed to fulfil the same uncertain and intriguing function. Pride of place is taken by the famous Alfred Jewel

¹⁹ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 22, lines 7–10, pp. 19–20.

²⁰ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 25, lines 1–6, p. 21.

²¹ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 106, lines 56–61, pp. 94–95.

²² Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 106, lines 46–54, p. 94. Compare the anonymous translator's treatment of the prayer at the very end of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which is expanded in order to address all those who may come 'either to read or to hear' this history; *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Thomas Miller, EETS, OS, 95–96 and 110–11 (London, 1890–98), I, 486–87. This expansion was presumably influenced by Bede's own reference to the 'listener or reader' in his original preface; *Venerabilis Bæda Opera Historica*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1896), I, 5. Compare also Æthelweard, who implies that Alfred's translation of the *Consolatio philosophiae* was commonly read aloud to 'hearers'; *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. by A. Campbell (London, 1962), Bk IV, c. 3, p. 51.

(fig. 28),²³ which comprises a reused Roman piece of quartz crystal, enclosed in a gold frame which owes its tear-drop shape to the shape of the crystal as it was found.²⁴ Through the crystal can be seen a plaque of cloisonné enamel depicting a seated male figure with blonde hair, holding in each hand what appear to be plant stems. At the back is fixed a separate gold plate with a tree-like design incised upon it, and attached to the bottom of the frame is an animal head of sheet gold, from the jaws of which protrude a hollow socket pierced laterally by a single gold rivet. The openwork lettering around the edge of the frame reads AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN which is, in Mercian dialect, 'Alfred ordered me to be made'. That the Jewel was found near Athelney, in Somerset, where Alfred took refuge in 878, where he built a fortress and subsequently a monastery, strengthens the likelihood that the inscription refers to the king himself. A second, smaller jewel (fig. 29), found at Minster Lovell, near Witney in Oxfordshire, consists of a hollow dome of sheet gold, bearing a cloisonné enamel with a double cross design, onto which is soldered a U-shaped socket with holes for a vertical rivet.²⁵ The close similarities with the Alfred Jewel, in the colours and execution of the enamel and in the distinctive gold filigree, strongly suggest that the Minster Lovell Jewel is a product of the same workshop.²⁶ The function of these two lavish jewels was also fulfilled at a more modest level by a third fitting (fig. 30), found at Bowleaze Cove, near Weymouth, in Dorset, in 1990.²⁷ The dome and socket are formed from continuous gold sheet, decorated only with a simple blue glass setting, patches of coarse granulation, and simple bands of beaded wire. This relatively restrained decoration is comparable to that of a fourth jewel which has only recently come to light (fig. 31), found in 1997 at Cley Hill near Warminster, in Wiltshire, and now in the Salisbury and South Wiltshire

²³ David A. Hinton, *A Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork in the Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1974), no. 23, pp. 29–48. For further discussion and references, see Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 203–06; *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art 966–1066*, ed. by Janet Backhouse, D. H. Turner, and Leslie Webster (London, 1984), no. 13, pp. 33–34; *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture A.D. 600–900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London, 1991), no. 260, pp. 282–83. See also Simon Keynes, 'The Discovery and First Publication of the Alfred Jewel', *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History*, 136 (1992), 1–8, and R. B. K. Stevenson, 'Further Thoughts on Some Well Known Problems', in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. by R. M. Spearman and J. Higgitt (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 16–26 (pp. 16–18).

²⁴ G. A. Kornbluth, 'The Alfred Jewel: Reuse of Roman Spolia', *Medieval Archaeology*, 33 (1989), 32–37.

²⁵ Hinton, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, no. 22, pp. 27–29; *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 259, p. 282.

²⁶ Hinton, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, pp. 44–45; John R. Clarke and David A. Hinton, *The Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1971), p. 7.

²⁷ *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 258, pp. 281–82.



Fig. 28 (left). The Alfred Jewel (gold, rock crystal, enamel; length 6.2 cm). *By kind permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

Fig. 29 (above). The Minster Lovell Jewel (gold, enamel; length 3.1 cm). *By kind permission of the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

Museum.²⁸ Like the Alfred Jewel, it incorporates an older piece of rock crystal, but in this case it is a fifth- or sixth-century amuletic bead, probably from a necklace or sword, that has dictated the design of its housing. Passing through the original hole in the bead is a narrow gold rivet, held in place at the back by a flat gold disc, and at the front by a blue glass setting similar to that on the Bowleaze Cove fitting. To this setting is fixed, in the form of a cross and a lateral band, a frame in the same sort of gold beading also found on the other three fittings. To this frame is attached a gold socket with holes for a vertical rivet.

²⁸ See Leslie Webster, 'Two New Parallels to the Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels: The Bowleaze and Warminster Jewels', in *'Through a Glass Brightly': Studies in Early Medieval, Byzantine and Medieval Enamel and Metalwork Presented to David Buckton*, ed. by Christopher Entwistle (Oxford, forthcoming).



Fig. 30. Fitting found at Bowleaze Cove, near Weymouth, Dorset (gold, blue glass; length 2.8 cm). © The British Museum. By kind permission of the Trustees.



Fig. 31. Fitting found at Cley Hill, near Warminster, Wiltshire (rock crystal, gold, blue glass; length 4.3 cm). By kind permission of the Visitors of the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

Any argument about the function of the Alfred Jewel, therefore, must take into account the other three fittings, which also shared this function, although apparently in varying contexts of lesser opulence. For example, it has sometimes been suggested that the Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels may have been royal helmet- or crown-fittings of some kind, but this now seems particularly unlikely in the light of the two more recent finds.²⁹ Essential to the function shared by all four fittings, clearly, was the feature of the tubular gold socket, which seems originally to have held a rod that has since decayed in each case, probably of wood or ivory.³⁰ Although the fittings vary considerably in

²⁹ For this crown theory, see J. Earle, *The Alfred Jewel: An Historical Essay with Illustrations and Map* (Oxford, 1901), pp. 44–50, and Mechthild Schulze-Dörlamm, ‘Juwelen der Kaiserin Theophanou: Ottonische Schmuck im Spiegel zeitgnössischer Buchmalerei’, *Archaeologisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 19 (1989), 415–22 (p. 419 and plate 54.3).

³⁰ It is interesting to note that Alfred is known to have received some tusks of fine walrus ivory from Ottar, a Norwegian traveling merchant who visited the West Saxon court; see *Two Voyagers at the Court of King Alfred*, ed. by Niels Lund (York, 1984), pp. 19–20, 44, and 58–61. No Alfredian walrus-ivory carving now survives; for tenth-century examples, see *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, nos 112–28, 130, and 132, pp. 113–28.

overall length, from the Alfred Jewel (6.2 cm) to the Bowleaze Cove piece (2.8 cm), each of the four sockets is consistently around 1 cm long with a diameter of about 0.5 cm. Each rod was strikingly slender, therefore, and extended only a short distance into the socket; moreover, in the case of the heavier jewels containing crystals, the junction between the socket and the main body seems sufficiently delicate to suggest that in use one grasped the fitting itself, as a conductor holds a baton, rather than the rod.³¹ It is this consideration that would seem to call into question Schramm's interpretation of the Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels as the terminals of ceremonial staffs or sceptres.³² There also seems to have been some utility in the flat back shared by the four fittings, especially since on the two more expensive jewels the reverse of the socket is also flat, along the same plane. *Prima facie*, therefore, there are good grounds for postulating some kind of pointing device which might on occasion be laid flat,³³ like a computer mouse. One need not necessarily identify this device as an *æstel*, of the sort sent by Alfred to each bishop together with his copy of the *Hierdebo*, for the precise meaning of this term is itself a moot point. *Æstel* does nevertheless seem most likely to mean 'book-pointer', rather than the other notable suggestions, a fragment of the True Cross or a decorated book-cover.³⁴ Alfred implies that it was to be found 'in' or 'on' the book, although it could be removed from it, and the word itself is probably related to the Latin (*h*)*astula*, meaning 'small spear' or 'splinter'; in the early eleventh century *Ælfric* employed *æstel* to gloss *indicatorium*, a very rare word probably meaning 'pointer'; and in the thirteenth century *æstel* was itself glossed as *festuca*, a 'stalk' or 'stick'.³⁵

³¹ E. Bakka, 'The Alfred Jewel and Sight', *Antiquaries Journal*, 46 (1966), 277–82 (pp. 278–79); Clarke and Hinton, *The Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels*, p. 8.

³² P. E. Schramm, 'The Alfred Jewel: eine Szepterbekrönung des angelsächsischen Königs Alfred (871–99)?', in his *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1954–56), I, 370–75, who interprets the figure of the Alfred Jewel as a royal ancestor, through comparison with the heads on the Sutton Hoo 'whetstone' and with the *baculus* surrendered to Charlemagne in 787 by Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, which terminated in a sculpted human figure. Compare the long staffs that are regularly depicted in the hands of imperial and royal legislators in illustrated Carolingian legal manuscripts; see H. Mordek, 'Frühmittelalterliche Gesetzgeber und Iustitia in Miniaturen Weltlicher Rechtshandschriften', *Settimane*, 42 (1995), 997–1052 and plates I–XL.

³³ Hinton, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, pp. 45–47.

³⁴ See, respectively, Bruce Harbert, 'King Alfred's *æstel*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 103–10, and Rowland L. Collins, 'King Alfred's *æstel* Reconsidered', *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), 37–58.

³⁵ For a convincing discussion of this evidence, see D. R. Howlett, 'Alfred's *æstel*', *English Philological Studies*, 14 (1975), 65–74; supported by E. G. Stanley, 'The Scholarly Recovery of the Significance of Anglo-Saxon Records in Prose and Verse: A New Bibliography', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 223–62 (p. 257), and E. G. Stanley, 'Owen Manning 1. On Old English *æstel* and 2. On the Aldbrough Inscription', *Notes and Queries*, 240 (1995), 10–13 (pp. 10–11). The substance of Howlett's argument is not weakened by the useful analysis of these glosses in

Alfred specifies, however, that each episcopal æstel was worth fifty mancuses (about a half-pound weight of gold),³⁶ which might cover the Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels on the grounds of their lavish treatment, but certainly not the Bowleaze Cove and Warminster pieces. Perhaps, therefore, we have two æstels appropriate for use or ceremonial presentation by the king himself, including one which bears his name, and two designed for rather humbler contexts. As already noted, Asser describes how Alfred provided his illiterate judges with access to wisdom by commanding a literate beneficiary of the revival, whether a member of the judge's family or household, to recite English books to him at every available opportunity.³⁷ Perhaps the two simpler æstels represent another form of inducement brought to bear upon Alfred's lay officials. Alternatively, they may reflect the efforts of certain aspiring nobles to imitate a current court fashion. In either case, although each æstel was not apparently a staff of office, it would have amounted to much the same thing, as a functional symbol of the user's desire for wisdom. The crosses on the Minster Lovell and Warminster Jewels would thus seem entirely appropriate, as might also the more sophisticated iconography of the Alfred Jewel, discussion of which must be postponed for reasons that will shortly become clear.

At least the two more opulent jewels, therefore, provide tangible examples of precisely the sort of work one would expect from Alfred's court craftsmen. Asser's curious use of the word *ædificia* has often been noted. *Ædificia* would normally mean 'buildings', but instead Asser employs the word in contexts which seem to imply that the *ædificia* in question were precious objects of gold and silver created by Alfred's craftsmen, and that the word should therefore be translated as 'treasures'.³⁸ As Charles Plummer first suggested, there may be some connection with the common early medieval practice of constructing reliquaries in the form of miniature houses,³⁹ but it is difficult to accept that this distinctive terminology could have arisen solely on this basis: for example, the *ædificia* that Alfred is said to have bestowed upon Guthrum and his men were surely 'treasures' of a more general kind.⁴⁰ Robert Deshman has recently suggested that Asser's usage may have been influenced by the biblical description of

their immediate manuscript contexts provided by R. I. Page, 'Yet Another Note on Alfred's *æstel*', *Leeds Studies in English*, 18 (1987), 9–18.

³⁶ P. Grierson, 'Carolingian Europe and the Arabs: The Myth of the Mancus', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 32 (1954), 1059–74.

³⁷ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 106, lines 46–54, p. 94.

³⁸ See Keynes and Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 249–50.

³⁹ Charles Plummer, *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1902), pp. 46–47; for a late-ninth-century reliquary of just this kind, found at Winchester, see *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 12, pp. 32–33.

⁴⁰ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 56, lines 33–34, p. 47 (*beneficia* in Stevenson's text is an editorial emendation without support in any of the textual witnesses).

Solomon's temple as the *aedificium domus Domini et aedificium regis* (III Kings 9. 1),⁴¹ and he has also drawn attention to the frequency with which the pursuit of divine wisdom is described in the language of craftsmanship and construction in Alfred's translations.⁴² At the heart of this outlook is Alfred's distinctive use of the word *craeft* as his preferred term for 'virtue, skill, strength', first noted by Peter Clemoes: as Alfred repeatedly reminds his readers, *wisdom is se hehsta craeft*.⁴³ On this basis, one wonders whether the term *aedificia* may reflect the edificatory or instructive purposes that artefacts created by Alfred's craftsmen seem to have been designed to serve. Certainly, there could be no more appropriate tool in the task of spiritual edification than a pointer which directed the eyes physically to the divine wisdom of the written word.

Asser also stresses Alfred's personal involvement in instructing his craftsmen, and emphasizes that these *aedificia* were novel, 'surpassing entirely the tradition of his predecessors'.⁴⁴ There would seem to be some truth behind Asser's praise, for fittings like the Alfred Jewel have no known medieval European parallels or later English descendants. Quite apart from the revival of wisdom itself, other reported royal innovations confirm this picture of an inventive king eager to apply novel solutions to practical problems. One thinks here, above all, of Alfred's construction of the burhs and his reorganization of the *fyrd* to create burghal garrisons, presumably in the orderly manner described in the Burghal Hidage.⁴⁵ Equally, the new, longer and faster warships designed by Alfred in 896 are well known, although their significance is less certain. A year earlier the king himself is reported to have instigated a double fortification of the river Lea which prevented the Danes from travelling downstream by ship.⁴⁶

⁴¹ 'The building of the house of the Lord and the building of the king'; Robert Deshman, 'The Galba Psalter: Pictures, Texts and Context in an Early Medieval Prayerbook', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1997), 109–38 (p. 133).

⁴² Deshman, 'The Galba Psalter', pp. 130–33.

⁴³ Peter Clemoes, 'King Alfred's Debt to Vernacular Poetry: The Evidence of *ellen* and *craeft*', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture presented to Helmut Gneuss*, ed. by M. Korhammer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 213–38 (pp. 213–17 and 223–38); cf. also N. G. Discenza, 'Power, Skill and Virtue in the Old English Boethius', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1997), 81–108. 'Wisdom is the highest virtue'; *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius*, ed. by Sedgefield, XXVII.ii, p. 62, line 24 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, III. 4. 7, p. 43. Compare especially *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 62, lines 5–10 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, IV.10, pp. 17–18.

⁴⁴ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 76, lines 6–9, p. 59.

⁴⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 893, cited from *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1892–99), but according to the corrected chronology adopted in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1961).

⁴⁶ *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 896 and 897.

Alfred's Candle-Lantern

This artefact, which has not survived, should be set alongside the æstels as another product of the king's logical creativity, also doubtless executed by his craftsmen. Typically, Alfred's starting point was a practical problem: according to Asser, having resolved to devote to God one half of his mental and bodily effort, both by day and by night, Alfred found it impossible to do so accurately, because of the darkness at night and because of the frequent rain and cloud in the daytime.⁴⁷ Asser is presumably referring here to the limitations of the sundial. Alfred's solution was to instruct his court chaplains to produce six wax candles, each weighing twelve pennies, that is, only 17 g (5/8 oz), and measuring 12 in., with each inch marked on its length.⁴⁸ Each candle would thus be burnt in turn through the twenty-four hours of each day and night. But because the king needed these candles with him at all times, their burning tended to be hastened unduly by gusts of wind, whether in churches, tents, or other structures. Again, Alfred devised a practical solution: he ordered an ornate lantern to be constructed from wood and finely shaved ox-horn, selecting the latter material for its translucent properties, in order that the calibration of the candles would remain visible. A small door, also of ox-horn, allowed the candle to be changed, while otherwise preventing draughts. The probable appearance of Alfred's lantern may be gauged from that carried by one of the soldiers about to arrest Christ in the Missal of Robert of Jumièges, dating from the first half of the eleventh century (fig. 32),⁴⁹ although the artist may in fact have had in mind a lantern containing an oil lamp, with windows of glass or leather, of the sort described by Bede and Aldhelm.⁵⁰ Asser's detailed account suggests that he at least regarded as novel and unfamiliar both the use of candles to measure time and the particular design of the lantern, perhaps including its windows of ox-horn.

Of these innovations, Alfred's use of candles was probably the more significant, and may even constitute an invention new to the medieval West, although this is a rather fragile suggestion *ex silentio*. Clocks regulated by the burning of candles or incense

⁴⁷ Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, cc. 103–04, pp. 89–91.

⁴⁸ On the weight and likely nature of these candles, see Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, pp. 338–39; for a short history of the candle, see R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, 9 vols (Leiden, 1964–72), vi, 134–42.

⁴⁹ Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS Y. 6 (written perhaps at Christ Church, Canterbury, probably before 1023), fol. 71^r; see H. A. Wilson, *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 11 (London, 1896), and *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 50, p. 69.

⁵⁰ See Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, pp. 340–41. Lanterns containing oil lamps with windows of horn are well attested in Classical Antiquity, but this material was gradually superseded, apparently, by parchment, stretched bladders, oiled linen, leather, or glass; see Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, vi, 166–71.

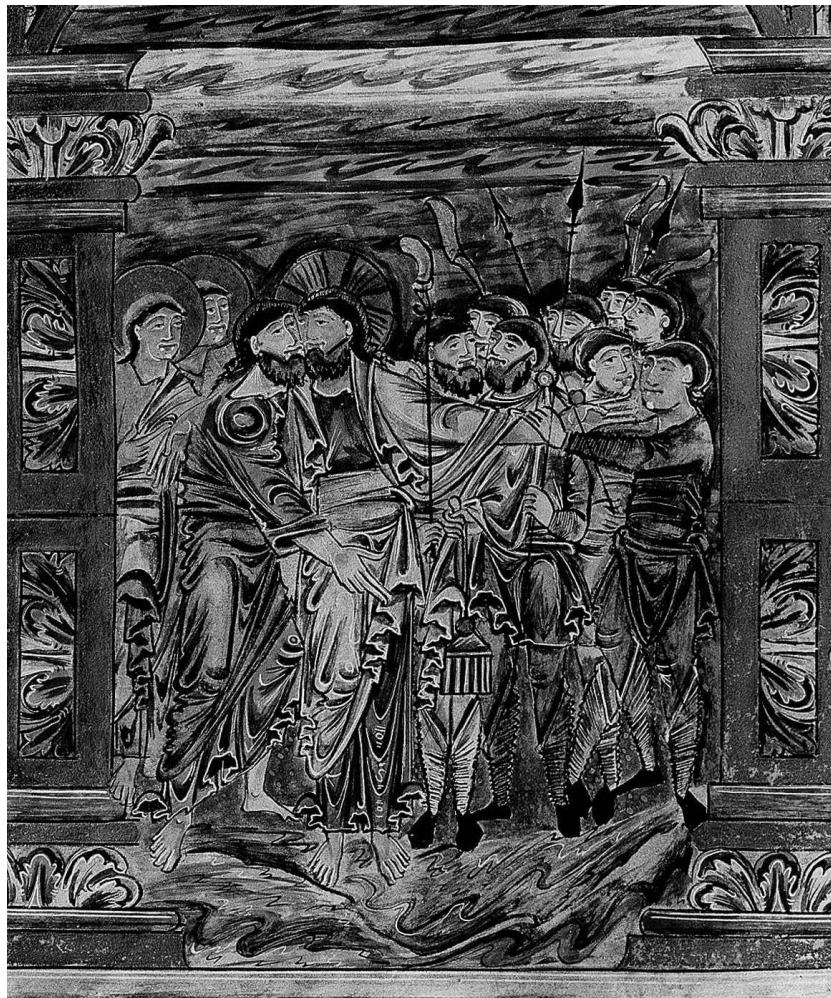


Fig. 32. Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS Y. 6, fol. 71^r (?Christ Church, Canterbury, s. XI^{1/2}): Judas kisses Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. Note the lantern borne by one of the approaching soldiers (cf. John 18. 3). *By kind permission of the Visitors of the Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen (photo: Didier Tragin and Catherine Lancien).*

seem to have been developed by the Chinese from as early as the fifth century AD,⁵¹ but, further west, apart from Alfred's lantern, the historians of time measurement cite only two early references to candle-clocks: by the monastic reformer William of Hirsau in around 1077,⁵² and in an Arab treatise, perhaps written in the eleventh century, known from a translation into Castilian undertaken at the court of Alfonso the Wise in the thirteenth century.⁵³ Neither Bede nor Byrhtferth of Ramsay betrays any awareness of candle-clocks in their scientific and computistical writings.⁵⁴ Rather, sundials provided the standard means of measuring time by day in the early Middle Ages, while at night one could observe the heavens, perhaps relying also, more unusually, upon some form of clepsydra or water-clock, such as that sent to Charlemagne in 807 by the caliph of Bagdad, Harun al-Rashid.⁵⁵ Monasteries, the principal guardians of time, employed such techniques to regulate their daily cycle of prayers not according to the hours of equal length familiar today, but rather according to the system of temporal hours, whereby the seasonally variable periods of day and night, punctuated by sunrise and sunset, are each divided equally into twelve hours.⁵⁶ Alfred's device, however, did not apparently have

⁵¹ According to J. Attali, *Histoires du temps* (Paris, 1982), pp. 62–63; from the seventh century according to Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*, VI, 142.

⁵² A. Borst, *The Ordering of Time* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 69.

⁵³ For a description, see J. T. Fraser, *Time: The Familiar Stranger* (Amherst, MA, 1987), pp. 50–51, and L. Wright, *Clockwork Man* (London, 1968), p. 55; the *Libro del reloj de la candela* was translated in the 1270s by the Hispano-Jewish scholar Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia, and is edited by D. Manuel Rico y Sinobas, *Libros del saber de astronomia del rey D. Alfonso X de Castilla*, 5 vols (Madrid, 1863–67), IV, 77–93.

⁵⁴ Bedae *Opera de temporibus*, ed. by Charles W. Jones (Cambridge, MA, 1943), which includes *De temporum ratione*, newly translated with excellent introduction, notes, and commentary by Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool, 1999); Bede, *De natura rerum*, ed. by Charles W. Jones, CCSL, 123A (Turnhout, 1975–80), pp. 174–234; *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, ed. by P. S. Baker and M. Lapidge, EETS, SS, 15 (Oxford, 1995).

⁵⁵ On sundials, see Wallis, *The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 315–17; Wesley M. Stevens, *Cycles of Time and Scientific Learning in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1995), article II, pp. 35–37; and *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 77, p. 94. On determining time at night, see S. C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 97–113. On Charlemagne's water-clock, see the *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH, SRG, 6 (Hannover, 1895), s.a. 807, pp. 123–24; cf. the *horologium nocturnum* sent by Pope Paul I to Pippin the Short in about 760 (*Codex Carolinus*, ed. by W. Gundlach, MGH, Epp., 3 (Berlin, 1892), no. 24, p. 529). The hourglass first appears in the fourteenth century; see Borst, *The Ordering of Time*, pp. 95–96.

⁵⁶ See Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 283–85 and 339; R. L. Poole, *Medieval Reckonings of Time* (London, 1918), pp. 11–12; G. Langenfelt, *The Historic Origin of the Eight Hours Day: Studies in English Traditionalism*, Kunglige Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets

any facility to follow the seasonal variations recorded by contemporary sundials,⁵⁷ but rather measured what were then known in learned circles as the ‘equinoctial’ hours, so-called because only at the two equinoxes were day and night of exactly equal length.⁵⁸ In other words, Alfred’s unusual choice would seem to have instituted a rigid method of time-keeping specific to his court, which differed significantly from the fluctuating rhythms of the monastic day.

Alfred’s candle-lantern would thus seem to be an innovation entirely typical of a king who, as Asser reports, ‘applied himself attentively to the investigation of things unknown’,⁵⁹ and who himself admitted, in an addition to his translation of Augustine, that there were ‘many things it would please me to know, about which I do not know’.⁶⁰ Indeed, Asser’s rather stylized account almost certainly masks an important process of experimentation by which the specifications for each candle were derived. One method, of course, would have been to wait until an equinox to obtain an equinoctial hour from a sundial,⁶¹ but an equinoctial hour could also be calculated approximately from a temporal hour at any time of the year from ratios available in contemporary calendars, which often list for each month the lengths of day and night for a particular locality, calculated in equinoctial hours.⁶² Alternatively, Alfred might have obtained an equinoctial

Akademiens Handlingar, 87 (Stockholm, 1954), pp. 13–17; G. Langenfelt, ‘King Alfred and the First Time-Measurer’, *Tekniska Museets Årsbok: Dædalus* (1962), 39–49 (pp. 43–44); Attali, *Histoires du temps*, pp. 69–79; Borst, *The Ordering of Time*, pp. 31–32; McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures*, pp. 97–113; Wallis, *The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 267–69 and 271.

⁵⁷ In this respect, Alfred’s candle-clock differed both from the Chinese example described by Attali, *Histoires du temps*, pp. 62–63, and from the Arab device known at the court of Alfonso the Wise (see above, note 53 for references).

⁵⁸ As concluded in *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, p. 339; by Langenfelt, *The Historic Origin of the Eight Hours Day*, p. 21, and Langenfelt, ‘King Alfred and the First Time-Measurer’, p. 47. For discussion of the equinoctial hours, see Bede’s *De temporum ratione*, cc. 3, 24, and 30–33 (*Bedae Opera de temporibus*, ed. by Jones, pp. 182–83, 227, 235–43); his *De temporibus*, cc. 7 and 8 (*Bedae Opera de temporibus*, ed. by Jones, pp. 297–98); and his *De natura rerum*, cc. 47–48 (*Bedae Opera de temporibus*, ed. by Jones, pp. 229–32). Cf. Stevens, *Cycles of Time*, article II, pp. 12–37.

⁵⁹ *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 76, lines 20–21, p. 60.

⁶⁰ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 56, lines 21–22. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, II.7, p. 11, line 17.

⁶¹ The precise date of vernal equinox was subject to dispute in the early Middle Ages (Stevens, *Cycles of Time*, article I, pp. 35–42 and 46; article IV, pp. 85–95; article V, p. 126) and determining it experimentally was an extremely difficult task (Stevens, *Cycles of Time*, article II, pp. 33–36).

⁶² Stevens, *Cycles of Time*, article II, pp. 20 and 37. For examples, see *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, ed. by F. Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society, 72 (London, 1934).

hour from the constant apparent rotation of the stars around the northern pole, as facilitated by an observational apparatus attributed to Pacificus, archdeacon of Verona (d. 844), although it is unclear how widely this technique was known.⁶³ Whichever method was used, it is clear from a reconstruction undertaken in the early 1950s that Alfred's candle-lantern would indeed have satisfied his own exacting requirements.⁶⁴

Alfred probably favoured the equinoctial hours over the temporal hours because they enabled him to divide his time more precisely into two halves, just as he seems to have preferred candles to the sundial in the hope of eliminating uncertainty.⁶⁵ Alfred's candle-lantern should thus be seen in the context of its particular purpose: the division of his time between God and the world, which complemented the equal division of his 'external riches' into revenue reserved for 'secular affairs' and that devoted to God.⁶⁶ It seems likely that these divisions represented a coherent attempt by Alfred to rule in accordance with the Gregorian attitude towards worldly authority found in the *Regula pastoralis*. At the heart of this text, and Alfred's translation of it, lies the conviction that the *rector* or *reccere* should struggle to fulfil two seemingly incompatible ideals: the contemplative life, dedicated to the love of God, and the active life, devoted to the love and service of one's neighbours in the world.⁶⁷ The ideal ruler is required inwardly to contemplate divine things while also to be occupied externally by the needs of his

⁶³ J. Wiesenbach, 'Pacificus von Verona als Erfinder einer Sternenuhr', in *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times*, ed. by P. L. Butzer and D. Lohrmann (Basel, 1993), pp. 229–50. The attribution to Pacificus depends upon an epitaph now thought to have been composed in the twelfth century; see Christina La Rocca, *Pacifico di Verona: Il passato carolingio nella costruzione della memoria urbana* (Rome, 1995), pp. 128–59. The earliest manuscript depiction of the apparatus dates from the tenth century.

⁶⁴ The replica candle measured exactly 12 in., weighed 18 g, and burned for four hours and twenty minutes. The extra twenty minutes might be explained by the extra gram, by the impossibility of reconstructing Alfredian wax, and by the fact that the replica apparently was not tested in a draught-free Alfredian lantern. See Langenfelt, *The Historic Origin of the Eight Hours Day*, p. 20, and Langenfelt, 'King Alfred and the First Time-Measurer', p. 46.

⁶⁵ William of Malmesbury claims that Alfred spent eight hours writing, reading, and praying, eight hours asleep, and eight hours attending to the business of the realm, but this threefold division is not previously attested, and probably represents William's own attempt to imagine how Alfred found time to sleep; *William of Malmesbury: Gesta Regum Anglorum / The History of the English Kings*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998–9), 1, 194–95. Langenfelt, *The Historic Origin of the Eight Hours Day*, deals exhaustively with the long tradition of dividing twenty-four hours into three portions that seems to have developed from William's account.

⁶⁶ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. Stevenson, c. 103, p. 89–90; cf. cc. 99–102.

⁶⁷ *Alfred's Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. by Sweet, VII, pp. 46–52. Cf. *Grégoire le Grand: Règle Pastorale*, ed. by Floribert Rommel, with Bruno Judic and Charles Morel, *Sources chrétiennes*, 381–82 (Paris, 1992), Part I, c. 7, pp. 150–54.

people.⁶⁸ The *Regula pastoralis* thus suitably complemented the language of Solomon's dream at Alfred's court, for it placed the acquisition of divine knowledge at the centre of an approach to power that was both humble and practical. Its lessons applied, moreover, to all those in positions of authority, including not only Alfred himself, but also especially his bishops. Perhaps, therefore, Alfred's candle-lantern was regarded as a functional symbol of his resolve to balance the two lives, and thus served to remind his courtiers of their own obligations to imitate the king in this respect. The candle-lantern may thus have fulfilled an edificatory role comparable to the function of the æstels. Consideration of the candle-lantern further strengthens the plausibility of Alfredian interest in a book-pointing device, and on this basis both innovations seem to have been designed to encourage the acquisition of wisdom through the act of reading. Indeed, comparison with the æstels raises the attractive possibility that further candle-lanterns may have been manufactured for Alfred's noble readers, in order that they might follow the disciplines of 'court time' even when absent from their royal role model.

The Fuller Brooch

One may now turn to an item of metalwork for which an Alfredian context has sometimes been suspected, although hitherto without any exploration of its possible connections with ideas current at Alfred's court. The Fuller brooch (fig. 33) was first brought to scholarly attention in 1910, and is of unknown provenance.⁶⁹ It consists of a slightly convex silver disc, 11.4 cm in diameter, whose engraved surface has been given added definition by the application of niello (black silver sulphide) and by fretwork near the edge. Two concentric circles frame sixteen roundels, containing in each quadrant one example of what appear to be four distinct categories: a head and shoulders of a human, a quadruped, a floral motif, and a bird entwined with foliate infill. In the middle, four lozenges and a central field enclose five figures, each of whom is performing a different gesture. Two holes have been drilled at the top at a much later stage, possibly to allow suspension after the fastening-pin on the reverse was removed.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Alfred's Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care, ed. by Sweet, XVI, p. 100, line 21, to p. 104, line 1. Cf. *Règle Pastorale*, ed. by Rommel, Part II, c. 5, lines 41–68, pp. 198–200.

⁶⁹ R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'Late Saxon Disc-Brooches', in *Dark Age Britain*, ed. by D. B. Harden (London, 1956), pp. 171–201 (pp. 173–90). For further discussion and references, see D. M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1000 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), no. 153, pp. 211–15; *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 11, pp. 30–31; *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 257, pp. 280–81; C. E. Karkov, 'Fuller Brooch', in *Medieval England: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, M. T. Tavormina, and Joel T. Rosenthal (New York and London, 1998), pp. 308–09; and D. R. Pratt, 'Fuller Brooch', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by John Blair, Simon Keynes, Michael Lapidge, and Donald Scragg (Oxford, 1999), pp. 196–98 (portions from which are reproduced here by kind permission of Blackwells Publishers).

⁷⁰ Bruce-Mitford, 'Late Saxon Disc-Brooches', pp. 178–79.



Fig. 33. The Fuller Brooch (silver, niello; diameter 11.4 cm).

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Silver disc-brooches bearing five bosses in a quadripartite arrangement represent a distinctive Anglo-Saxon form, and the earliest examples appear at the very end of the eighth century. Such silver disc-brooches bear some superficial resemblance to a series of gold-and-cloisonné disc-brooches which survive from seventh-century Kent. These sumptuous Kentish brooches were a short-lived feature of high-status female attire, however, and silver disc-brooches would seem to have had a quite separate origin.⁷¹

⁷¹ See *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, pp. 221 and 228–30, cf. pp. 47–50. Some more direct connection was implied by Bruce-Mitford, ‘Late Saxon Disc-Brooches’, pp. 171–73.

Their emergence may be associated with an evident decline in the popularity of dress pins, but it is unlikely that silver disc-brooches were either exclusively or even primarily items of female attire. They apparently served to fasten a cloak at the shoulder, to judge from manuscript illustrations, where similar disc-shaped clasps are more commonly worn by male rather than female figures.⁷² The Fuller brooch is by far the most accomplished ninth-century example of this form, executed in the dominant 'Trewhiddle style' of the day, which is characterized by the interplay of lively animals and foliate motifs, 'usually reserved in silver (and occasionally gold) against a niello ground'.⁷³ Two royal rings, probably given as gifts rather than in fact worn by Alfred's relatives, strongly suggest both that the Trewhiddle style was current at the West Saxon court from the middle of the ninth century at the very least, and that, unusually, it was being employed to adorn artefacts with iconographic schemes of meaning and significance to their commissioners. A gold ring found at Laverstock in Wiltshire bears the name of Alfred's father, King Æthelwulf (839–58), and depicts the Fountain of Life flanked by two peacocks, a Christian symbol of immortality with a long heritage.⁷⁴ A gold ring found near Sherburn in Yorkshire is inscribed with the name of Alfred's sister, Æthelswith, queen of the Mercians, who left England in exile in 874. In the central roundel is the haloed Lamb of God, identified by the capital letters A and D.⁷⁵

Although the Fuller brooch stands apart from all other ninth-century metalwork in its overall quality and in its elegant handling of human figures, stylistic comparisons would seem to place it chronologically between the two royal rings of the mid-ninth century and the sword found at Abingdon, whose departures from the classic Trewhiddle style suggest a late-ninth- or early-tenth-century date.⁷⁶ The small foliate fill-ups that are found with the human busts in the roundels of the brooch, for example, also appear on the ring of Æthelswith. The double-nicked tail feathers of the peacocks on the ring of Æthelwulf seem to prefigure the plant stems held by the central figure on the brooch, but such plant ornament first appears in abundance on the Abingdon sword.

⁷² See, for example, *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, pp. 26, 49, 62, 66, 67, and plate 26.

⁷³ *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, pp. 220–21; cf. also p. 268.

⁷⁴ *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 9, p. 30; *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 243, pp. 268–69. On peacock imagery, see G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 3 vols (Gütersloh, 1966–71), III, 177–78, to be read in conjunction with Webster, 'Aedificia nova'.

⁷⁵ *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 10, p. 30; *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 244, p. 269.

⁷⁶ On the Abingdon sword, see Hinton, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, no. 1, pp. 1–7, and *The Golden Age*, ed. by Backhouse, Turner, and Webster, no. 14, p. 34. It is possible, but by no means certain, that the lower guard depicts the four symbols of the Evangelists, in which case the sword might also be placed in the West Saxon tradition of metalwork bearing unusual iconographic schemes.

Rupert Bruce-Mitford dated the brooch to the period *c.* 825–50, mainly in view of the parallels between its human figures and the evangelists in the Book of Cerne,⁷⁷ but one might equally point to the miniatures added in the early tenth century, perhaps at Winchester, to the so-called ‘Æthelstan Psalter’, many of whose human figures have centre partings and serious faces, with nose connected to mouth by a straight line, and circular, piercing eyes.⁷⁸

An Alfredian context for the Fuller brooch is suggested not only by its likely late-ninth-century date and superb workmanship, but also by the fact that, like the two West Saxon rings, but unlike all other disc-brooches, it was designed to convey a specific iconographic message, the main feature of which is conventionally believed to be the Five Senses. Any doubts one might have about the clarity of this scheme should be ascribed to the conciseness necessary to fit five complex ideas into a small area.⁷⁹ The brooch designer has therefore largely omitted any objects of sensation. Clockwise from top left, Taste has his hand in his mouth, Smell has his hands behind his back yet still senses the foliate infill that points towards his nose, Touch is placing his hands palm to palm, and Hearing is running in response to the call that his right hand at his ear has amplified. Sight, given extra importance by his central position, the small cross on his vestments, and the plant stems in his hands, stares out with exaggerated circular eyes.

Any explanation of the brooch’s iconography, therefore, would need to take account of the primacy of Sight among the Five Senses, and presumably also the different aspects of animate creation in the outer roundels, which seem sufficiently schematic as to appear rather incongruous if their function were merely decorative. Because there seem to have been no representations of the Five Senses in classical or late antique art, subsequent attempts to depict this theme in the Middle Ages were necessarily experimental. The Fuller brooch seems to be the most precocious of these medieval attempts to create a new iconography, predating the next known examples by some three hundred

⁷⁷ Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll. 1. 10 (Mercia, *?c.* 818–30), fols 2^v, 12^v, 21^v, and 31^v; see M. P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London, 1996), plates I(a), II(a), III(a), and IV(a); Bruce-Mitford, ‘Late Saxon Disc-Brooches’, pp. 180–83.

⁷⁸ London, British Library, Cotton Galba A. xviii (northern Francia, saec. IX^{1/2}, with further material added on the continent in the later ninth century, and in Wessex saec. Xⁱⁿ and saec. X^{2/4}); for a description, see S. Keynes, ‘Anglo-Saxon Entries in the “Liber Vitae” of Brescia’, in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately*, ed. by J. Roberts and J. L. Nelson, with M. R. Godden (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 99–119 (pp. 117–19, with references). Note especially the figure of Christ in the First and Second Judgement miniatures (fols 2^v and 21^v; T. H. Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration* (Kalamazoo, 1992), plates 1.1 and 1.14); for discussion of all the added miniatures and their significance, see Deshman, ‘The Galba Psalter’.

⁷⁹ For a more lengthy account of the reasons for favouring the Five Senses over other possible interpretations, see Bruce-Mitford, ‘Late Saxon Disc-Brooches’, pp. 183–86.

years.⁸⁰ Any initial source of inspiration for this new iconography would therefore seem to have been philosophical rather than pictorial.

In the classical world, the Five Senses and their functioning had been the subject of much philosophical debate which can not be explored in any detail here. It should suffice, rather, to take prevailing patristic attitudes towards the Five Senses as a starting point.⁸¹ In general the church fathers tended to regard the senses as neutral: necessary for knowledge, yet a source of temptation if not properly controlled by the higher faculties. For example, in recounting the wonder of creation in his *Exameron*, Ambrose notes how God has carefully ensured that each human sense organ is suitably protected from external danger, and argues that it is man's ability to interpret the messages of the senses that distinguishes him from all other animals.⁸² Lactantius had described man's perfection in similar terms, yet in his *Divinae institutiones* he also warns that each of the Five Senses may convey corresponding pleasures, all of which must be conquered through virtue.⁸³ In a similar way, Augustine in Book X of his *Confessiones* analyses his own susceptibility to the various temptations posed by each of the Five Senses in turn.⁸⁴ Biblical exegetic material indicates that this ambivalent view of the Five Senses must have been known in England from at least the conversion onwards. The tendency was for commentators to interpret any scriptural reference to the number five as a reference to the Five Senses and to these associations with temptation and mortal

⁸⁰ For useful comparative surveys of this medieval tradition, see Carl Nordenfalk, 'Les Cinq Sens dans l'art du Moyen Age', *Revue de l'art*, 34 (1976), 17–28, and Nordenfalk, 'The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 48 (1985), 1–22. Nordenfalk's interpretation of the Fuller brooch as a love token, on the basis of a thirteenth-century poem ('Les Cinq Sens', pp. 20–21), seems rather arbitrary.

⁸¹ For a brief overview of classical and patristic interpretations of the Five Senses, see L. Vinge, *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition*, Acta Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis, 72 (Lund, 1975), pp. 15–46. A fuller discussion would also need to consider the Stoics, Galen, Plotinus, Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa, and John of Damascus. Roger Penkett of Reading University is currently preparing a Ph.D. thesis on the theme of the senses in late antique and early medieval visions and dreams. For an exploration of the imagery of sensation in the Old English poem *The Phoenix*, see Yun Lee Too, 'The Appeal to the Senses in the Old English *Phoenix*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 91 (1990), 229–42.

⁸² Ambrose, *Exameron*, ed. by C. Schenkl, CSEL, 32 (Part 1) (Vienna, 1896), Bk VI, c. 9, pp. 246–60.

⁸³ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, ed. by S. Brandt, CSEL, 19 (Part 1) (Vienna, 1890), Bk VI, cc. 20–23, pp. 555–71.

⁸⁴ *St. Augustine's Confessions*, ed. by W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, MA, 1912), Bk X, cc. 30–34, i, 150–75. Compare Gregory the Great, who likens the Five Senses to five 'roads', by which the mind may reach out to desire external things; *S. Gregori Magni Moralia in Iob*, ed. by M. Adriaen, CCSL, 143, 143A, and 143B (Turnhout, 1979–85), Bk XXXI, c. ii, pp. 1065–66 (quoted by Taion of Zaragoza in his *Sententiae*, Bk IV, ch. 5, *PL*, 80, col. 996A–D).

existence.⁸⁵ Hence Bede in his commentary on Luke follows verbatim a homily of Gregory the Great on the parable of the dinner (Luke 14. 16–24). Among the many guests who fail to attend a neighbour's feast, one gives the excuse that he needs to test his five yoke of oxen, which he has recently purchased. For Gregory and Bede, these five yoke of oxen symbolize the Five Senses as a source of external curiosity, in that they lead the mind away from the spiritual pleasures of the Lord's banquet.⁸⁶ Similarly, Bede interprets the presence of five wash-basins in the Temple as a reference to the remission of bodily sins through baptism (III Kings 7. 27);⁸⁷ while the sixty queens (5 x 12) mentioned in the Song of Songs 6. 7 symbolize for Bede those who temper their Five Senses in accordance with apostolic teaching.⁸⁸ A similar outlook is evident in a late-eighth-century Carolingian poem on the attributes of good priests. One of the signs of a good priest is that he rules his Five Senses with reason, and thus prevents them from sin and from perceiving evil.⁸⁹ This outlook was also adopted in the late ninth century by Notker the Stammerer of St-Gallen, in a poem on the Five Senses addressed to his former pupil, Abbot Solomon, Bishop of Constance. Notker portrays the Five Senses as the source of temptations which are explicitly carnal, and Solomon is warned to guard against these temptations if he wishes to uphold his episcopal office.⁹⁰

One might contrast this long patristic tradition with the rather more playful interpretation adopted by Bede's Mercian contemporary, Tatwine, in his riddle *De*

⁸⁵ For example, Luke 9. 14 (the feeding of the five thousand): Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, ed. by M. Adriaen, CCSL, 14 (Turnhout, 1957), Bk VI, c. 80, p. 202. John 4. 18 (the five husbands of the woman of Samaria): Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, ed. by A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL, 44A (Turnhout, 1975), LXIV.7, p. 143–45; Augustine's interpretation here is followed by Alcuin (*Expositio in Iohannis Evangelium*, PL, 100, cols 795–96), and by Eriugena (*Jean Scot: Commentaire sur l'évangile de Jean*, ed. by E. Jeauneau, *Sources chrétiennes*, 180 (Paris, 1972), pp. 308–10).

⁸⁶ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, Bk II, no. 36, PL, 76, cols 1268B–1269A; Bede, *In Lucam*, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL, 120 (Turnhout, 1960), pp. 279–80. Compare the influence of Gregory's homily on Ælfric, discussed by Bruce-Mitford, 'Late Saxon Disc-Brooches', pp. 186–87.

⁸⁷ Bede, *De Templo*, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL, 119A (Turnhout, 1969), Bk II, lines 901–15, pp. 214–15; cf. lines 631–39, pp. 207–08.

⁸⁸ Bede, *In Cantica Canticorum*, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL, 119B (Turnhout, 1983), pp. 307–08. Cf. Alcuin's *Confessio*, which includes an admission of sins committed *in visu, in auditu, in gustu, in odoratu, et tactu* (PL, 101, cols 524C–526A and 1404B–1405B).

⁸⁹ *Item alfabetum de bonis sacerdotibus*, ed. by E. Dümmeler, MGH, Poet., 1 (Berlin, 1881), p. 81. The manuscript transmission of this anonymous poem is associated with the poetry of Paul the Deacon and Peter of Pisa.

⁹⁰ *Versus de quinque sensibus*, ed. by P. de Winterfeld, MGH, Poet., 4.1 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 343–44.

quinque sensibus. Tatwine avoids any connection with sin or temptation, and focuses instead upon the practical functions of the Five Senses in everyday life. The Five Senses are portrayed as five brothers, each bearing different offerings to their ‘temple’, which is presumably the mind:

Nos quini, uario fratres sub nomine, templum
Concessum nobis colimus constanter ab ortu.
Nam thuris segetem fero, fercula et ille saporis,
Hic totum presens afferit tangi, ille uidendum,
Ast laetam quintus famam tristemque ministrat.⁹¹

There are interesting parallels with the Fuller brooch here, both in the depiction of the Five Senses as young men, and in the spirit of practicality and playfulness which the brooch seems to share. These parallels are perhaps no more than one might expect from two products of the same Anglo-Saxon cultural environment, however, and need not imply any more direct connection.

The problem is that neither Tatwine nor the patristic emphasis upon temptation would account for the primacy of Sight depicted on the brooch. One well-known physical explanation for the primacy of Sight was provided by Isidore in his *Etymologiae*:

Sight (*visus*) is so called, because it is livelier (*vivacior*) than the other senses [. . .]. So it is that when we talk about things which pertain to the other senses, we say ‘see’; as when we say ‘see how it sounds’, ‘see how it tastes’, and so on.⁹²

Isidore’s explanation is quoted verbatim, for example, by Hrabanus Maurus in his encyclopedia *De rerum naturis*.⁹³ Given the small cross on Sight’s vestments, however, the significance of Sight in the case of the brooch would seem more likely to have been philosophical or theological, rather than simply physical. One wonders, therefore, whether the brooch designer rather had in mind the Neoplatonic and Christian metaphysics that were ultimately dependent upon such a physical observation: namely that, in addition to the corporeal eyes, there were the ‘mind’s eyes’ (*oculi mentis*), through which the soul could perceive heavenly things.

⁹¹ ‘Untiringly we five brothers with different names have tended a temple ever since it was entrusted to us. One of us provides fragrance, another presents tasty dishes, another everything tangible, still another the visible, and the fifth brings home good and bad news’: Tatwine, *Aenigmata*, ed. by F. Glorie, CCSL, 133 (Turnhout, 1968), no. XXVI, p. 193.

⁹² *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911), XI.I.18–25.

⁹³ Hrabanus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, Bk VI, ch. 1, *PL*, 111, col. 143C–D. Compare Hrabanus Maurus, *De anima*, c. 12, *PL*, 110, col. 1120.

Although these ‘mind’s eyes’ are a patristic commonplace, favoured particularly by Gregory the Great,⁹⁴ it is striking that they should be employed by Alfred in his translations at every available opportunity, over and above the more occasional references to them in the Latin originals.⁹⁵ Alfred discusses these *modes eagan* most fully in translating Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, Book I of which is dominated by the distinction between sense perception, on the one hand, and the analogous process of perceiving God and eternal truths with the intellect. When Augustine argues that the *sensus* are inadequate as a means of knowing God, Alfred explains explicitly that this means the ‘outer senses’: ‘neither eyes, nor ears, nor smell, nor taste, nor touch’.⁹⁶ Conversely, God can only be known via the ‘inner senses’.⁹⁷ As in the Latin original, Alfred devotes the rest of his translation to the consequent attempt by the persona of ‘Reason’ to enable her human interlocutor to ‘see God with the eyes of your mind as clearly as you now see the sun with the eyes of the body’.⁹⁸ Alfred stresses far more explicitly than Augustine, however, that it is through the ‘mind’s eyes’ that each man attempts to see the most important Alfredian concept of all, wisdom:

Just as the visible sun illuminates the eyes of our body, so wisdom illuminates the eyes of our mind, that is, our understanding (*andgit*); and just as, when the eyes of the body are more sound, they receive more of the sun’s light, so also it is with the mind’s eyes, that is, understanding. The more it is sound, the more it can see the eternal sun, that is, wisdom.⁹⁹

In both texts, ‘Reason’ continues by describing how one may exercise one’s eyes by staring at objects of increasing brightness, until they are sound enough to behold the sun.¹⁰⁰ In the context of Alfred’s court, this advice would seem to have acquired added significance as a metaphor for the inculcation of wisdom in his newly literate readers. It is equally significant that Alfred immediately then warns against the desire for ‘worldly honours, especially immoderate and wrongful ones’, expanding loosely upon

⁹⁴ See G. R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 99–104. A global search for *oculi/oculus mentis* in the CETEDOC database yields over 200 references.

⁹⁵ See also *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, ed. by Stevenson, c. 76, line 68, p. 61; cf. c. 89, line 7.

⁹⁶ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 59, lines 5–9. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, III.8, p. 14, lines 1–3.

⁹⁷ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 59, line 10, to p. 60, line 2. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, III.8, p. 14, lines 4–24.

⁹⁸ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 64, lines 5–8. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, VI.12, p. 19, lines 18–21.

⁹⁹ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 78, lines 3–8 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, XIII.23, p. 35, lines 5–9.

¹⁰⁰ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 78, lines 8–23. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, XIII.23, p. 35, line 10, to p. 36, line 15.

Augustine's Neoplatonic flight from the sensible world.¹⁰¹ Augustinian wisdom has thus acquired Solomonic resonance, and implies precisely the absence of worldly desire that Alfred is expecting his noble readers to imitate.

That Alfred attached the utmost significance to the *modes eagan* is further demonstrated by the considerable care that he took to revise the original account of intellectual perception in the *Soliloquia* in accordance with *De uidendo Deo*, Augustine's much later pronouncement on the same subject.¹⁰² Whereas in the *Soliloquia* Augustine's Neoplatonism had encouraged him to imply that already, in this life, the soul might be blessed (*beata*) with the understanding of God,¹⁰³ Augustine's argument in *De uidendo Deo* is best summarized by I Corinthians 13. 12, 'we see now through a glass darkly, then face to face', and by I John 3. 2, 'we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is'.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, Alfred repeatedly departs from the original *Soliloquia* in order to stress that in this life 'you cannot see wisdom naked, just as he is, with the eyes of your mind, for you can never do that while you are in the darkness of your sins'.¹⁰⁵ This revision prepares the ground for Alfred's own 'Book III', which he adds to his translation with the intention of completing the *Soliloquia*, which Augustine had left unfinished. In an apocalyptic vision, Alfred satisfactorily reveals that it is only after the Day of Judgement that we will finally see God 'entirely, just as he is, and know him ever afterwards as fully as he now knows us'.¹⁰⁶

If the figure of Sight in the central field of the brooch reflects this special spiritual significance of the *modes eagan*, the aspects of creation in the outer roundels recall Alfred's distinctive treatment of the many arguments appealing to nature that he encountered in both Boethius and Augustine. In particular, Alfred expands substantially upon a passage in Augustine's opening prayer where God is praised for bringing cyclical order to the heavens, so that 'the unstable movement of mutable things [...] is always drawn back to the appearance of stability'.¹⁰⁷ Alfred too notes the repetitive cycles of the seasons, the stars, and the tides, but then adds that

¹⁰¹ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 78, line 25, to p. 79, line 8. Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, XIV.24, p. 36, line 19, to p. 37, line 13.

¹⁰² See Pratt, 'The Political Thought of Alfred the Great', pp. 330–46; cf. Milton McC. Gatch, 'King Alfred's Version of Augustine's *Soliloquia*: Some Suggestions on Its Rationale and Unity', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 17–46.

¹⁰³ *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, VII.14, p. 22, line 18, to p. 23, line 3.

¹⁰⁴ Augustine, *De uidendo Deo*, ed. by A. Goldbacher, CSEL, 44 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1904), no. CXLVII, cc. 22–28, 37, and 51, pp. 295–303, 310–12, and 327–28.

¹⁰⁵ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 79, lines 19–22 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, XIV.25, p. 37, lines 17–21.

¹⁰⁶ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 93, lines 18–20. Cf. I John 3. 2 and I Corinthians 13. 12.

¹⁰⁷ *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, I.4, p. 8, lines 1–12.

Some creatures change in another way, so that the same ones do not come again where they formerly were, entirely as they were. But others come in their place, just as leaves on trees; and apples and grass and plants and trees grow old and wither, and others come and wax green and grow and ripen, whereupon they again begin to wither; and likewise all beasts and birds, all of which are too lengthy to enumerate here. So too men's bodies grow old, just as other creatures do. But just as they formerly live more worthily than trees or other beasts, so too they will arise more worthily on the day of judgement, so that never thereafter shall their bodies die nor grow old; and even though the body may have decayed before that time, nevertheless the soul was always alive since the time when it was first created.¹⁰⁸

The wonder of natural renewal thus prefigures the wonder of the general resurrection.¹⁰⁹ Plants, beasts, birds, and even 'men's bodies' grow old and die, but because men also possess an eternal soul, their bodies will arise again on the Day of Judgement. Later in the same translation Alfred borrows from his interpretation of Boethius in identifying 'two eternal creations, namely, angels' and men's souls, to which [God] has granted a certain portion of eternal gifts, such as wisdom and righteousness, and other things that are too many for me to enumerate'.¹¹⁰ It is interesting to note that at another point in his translation, Alfred defines the *modes eagan* as a series of 'virtues' (*craeftas*), among which 'wisdom' and 'righteousness' are prominently included.¹¹¹ The eternity of the soul seems to be closely associated with the theme of spiritual vision.

On this basis, Alfred's version of the *Soliloquia* would seem to permit a tentative interpretation of the entire iconographic scheme depicted on the Fuller brooch. The outer roundels would seem to portray those four aspects of animate creation that grow old and die: plants, beasts, birds, and 'men's bodies'. The human busts in the outer roundels would thus serve to emphasize the distinction between man's bodily existence, which he shares with virtually all other created things, and his eternal soul, which he shares with angels alone. Hence, in deliberate contrast to the outer roundels, the figure of Sight in the central field would seem to depict the eternal spiritual faculty of man's eternal soul, the 'mind's eyes'. Only these 'mind's eyes' have the ability to perceive wisdom, 'the eternal sun', and it is this ability that will receive its ultimate fulfilment after the Day of Judgement, when God is seen 'as he is'. As such, these 'mind's eyes'

¹⁰⁸ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 53, lines 17–27.

¹⁰⁹ See Gatch, 'King Alfred's Version of Augustine's *Soliloquia*', pp. 27–28 and n. 46.

¹¹⁰ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 82, lines 14–17; cf. p. 85, lines 16–19 (unparalleled additions). Compare *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius*, ed. by Sedgefield, XL.vii, p. 140, line 30, to p. 141, line 3; XLI.v, p. 146, lines 8–14; XLII, p. 147, line 29, to p. 148, line 2. Cf. *Philosophiae Consolatio*, ed. by Bieler, V. 2. 8, p. 91; V. 4. 28–31, p. 98; V. 6. 3–5, p. 102. See also two unparalleled additions by Alfred, in XLI.ii, p. 142, lines 8–20; and in XLI.iii, p. 143, line 30, to p. 144, line 3.

¹¹¹ *Soliloquies*, ed. by Carnicelli, p. 62, lines 4–10 (an unparalleled addition). Cf. *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. by Hörmann, Bk I, IV.9, p. 16, lines 8–11.

should be carefully distinguished from the five 'outer senses', which perform an analogous role in perceiving the material world alone. As a sophisticated iconographic representation of Alfredian thought, therefore, the Fuller brooch would seem to convey a familiar didactic message about the need for wisdom and the means of acquiring it. The edificatory value of the brooch could only have been increased if, as these close connections with Alfred's own thought suggest, it had been commissioned and worn by the king himself.

The enigma surrounding the identity of the human figure on the Alfred Jewel is only further complicated, however, by its resemblance to the personification of Sight on the Fuller brooch. Because both figures have centre partings and prominent eyes, and hold twin plant stems resting upon each shoulder, Bakka has suggested that the figure on the Alfred Jewel may also represent Sight.¹¹² Such an interpretation would seem particularly appropriate if the Jewel did indeed function as the terminal of a book-pointer. Plant stems or floral rods are, however, a commonplace in Insular art, and are not necessarily attributes sufficient to identify their holder. They are held, for example, by characters as diverse as the animal-headed figure on the right-hand end of the Franks Casket,¹¹³ by two figures in a late-eighth-century relief panel at Breedon-on-the-Hill in Leicestershire,¹¹⁴ by an unidentified youth on the late-eighth- or possibly ninth-century cross-shaft at Codford St Peter in Wiltshire,¹¹⁵ and by numerous personages in the Book of Kells.¹¹⁶ In the early tenth century, they are held by the figure of Virgo in the 'Æthelstan Psalter',¹¹⁷ and by two prophets on the St Cuthbert stole.¹¹⁸ That said, it is possible, as David Howlett has suggested, that the Alfred Jewel depicts Christ, bearing the flowering rod of the priest Aaron, who was conventionally held to prefigure Christ.¹¹⁹ This would

¹¹² Bakka, 'The Alfred Jewel and Sight'.

¹¹³ *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 70, pp. 101–03.

¹¹⁴ R. J. Cramp, 'Schools of Mercian Sculpture', in *Mercian Studies*, ed. by A. Dornier (Leicester, 1977), pp. 191–233 (pp. 207–11 and fig. 55).

¹¹⁵ *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 208, pp. 243–44.

¹¹⁶ Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 58 (?Iona, ?saec. VII^{med}–IXⁱⁿ); see F. Henry, *The Book of Kells* (London, 1974). For example, by some of the angels who accompany the Virgin and Child (fol. 7^v, plate 10) and the portrait of Christ in Matthew's Gospel (fol. 32^v, plate 26), by some of the angels on the 'Chi-Rho' and *Una autem* pages (fols 34^r and 285^r, plates 29 and 89), and by the bearded figure (?God) half hidden by the M with which the *Argumentum* of Matthew's Gospel begins (fol. 12^r, plate 12).

¹¹⁷ Fol. 11^r; Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration*, plate 1.9.

¹¹⁸ See *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. by C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford, 1956), plates XXIV, XXXIII, and XXXIV.

¹¹⁹ D. R. Howlett, 'The Iconography of the Alfred Jewel', *Oxoniensia*, 39 (1974), 44–52. Compare an eighth-century imitation jewel from Whitby, which may similarly depict a beardless Christ holding Aaron's flowering staff; *The Making of England*, ed. by Webster and Backhouse, no. 107 (k), p. 144.

place the Alfred Jewel in the same tradition as the representations of Christ in judgement, bearing sprouting staff and cross, that occur on Irish high crosses of the ninth century.¹²⁰ Christ and Luke are similarly depicted in this so-called ‘Osiris pose’ in the Book of Kells and the Lichfield Gospels respectively.¹²¹ This tradition may also help to explain the iconography of various early-eighth-century *sceattas*, where a male figure is flanked by a pair of crosses or plant stems.¹²² In this tradition, however, the sprouting staff seems more to symbolize Christ’s eternal priesthood, as emphasized in the exegesis of Luke’s Gospel, than, as Howlett argues, Christ’s status as the wisdom of God.¹²³ It

¹²⁰ See P. Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographic and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols (Bonn, 1992); e.g. the Tower Cross at Kells (no. 127; I, 108–11, and III, fig. 355), the Cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice (no. 174; I, 140–46, and III, fig. 473), the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois (no. 54; I, 48–53, and III, fig. 134), the Sandstone Cross at Durrow (no. 89; I, 79–82, and III, fig. 248), the Sandstone Cross at Arboe (no. 8; I, 15–18, and III, fig. 32), and the Ringed Cross at Termonfeckin (no. 209; I, 170–71, and III, fig. 587). See I, 297–300 for discussion of such Last Judgement iconography, and I, 367–73 on the dating of these crosses. Similar depictions of Christ occur on one of the two early-ninth-century crosses at Sandbach, Cheshire (see A. Jane Hawkes, ‘A Question of Judgement: The Iconic Programme at Sandbach, Cheshire’, in *From the Isles to the North: Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. by Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), pp. 213–19 (fig. 3), who convincingly interprets the scene as the transfiguration), and on a tenth- or eleventh-century cross-shaft fragment at Burton-in-Kendal (R. J. Cramp, *Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands*, Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, 2 (Oxford, 1988), pp. 82–83 and illustrations 180–83).

¹²¹ Henry, *The Book of Kells*, fol. 202^v, plate 68 (the figure in the doorway at the bottom of the so-called ‘Temptation’ page). Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS I (?Northumbria, ?saec. VIII¹²), p. 218; Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting: Book Illumination in the British Isles, 600–800* (New York, 1976), plate 25. Compare the ‘Tetramorph’ page in Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61 (134) (Trier Gospels, ?Echternach, saec. VIII²²), fol. 5^v; Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting*, plate 31.

¹²² Michael Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford*, 3 vols (London, 1993–94), III, plate 19, nos 329–30, plate 20, no. 339, and plate 21, no. 353 (all belong to Secondary Series L or related groups). For the suggestion that a group of Secondary Series K *sceattas* collectively depict the Five Senses, in a manner possibly related to the iconography of the Fuller brooch, see Anna Gannon, ‘The Iconography of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage (6th to 8th centuries)’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge University, 2000), p. 282 (publication forthcoming).

¹²³ See George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel-Books 650–800* (London, 1987), pp. 122–24 and 168–74, and Henderson, *Bede and the Visual Arts*, Jarrow Lecture, 1980 (Newcastle, 1980), pp. 17–18; on the Kells ‘Temptation’ page, see also J. O’Reilly, ‘Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy’, in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin 6–9 September 1992*, ed. by F. O’Mahony (Dublin, 1994), pp. 344–97 (pp. 382–89).

may be significant, nevertheless, that lady Wisdom is depicted holding Aaron's flowering rod in her house of seven columns in Prudentius's *Psychomachia*.¹²⁴ On certain of these high crosses, Christ is portrayed standing upon snakes, a very common way of depicting Psalm 90. 13, 'you shall tread upon the asp and the viper'.¹²⁵ Howlett is justly tempted, therefore, to interpret the animal head beneath the human figure on the Alfred Jewel as a similar reference to Christ's triumph over evil. If the figure behind the transparent rock crystal is indeed Christ, it would be hard to imagine a more fitting reminder of that important quotation from I Corinthians 13. 12 in *De uidendo Deo*, 'we see now through a glass darkly (*per speculum in enigmate*), then face to face'.¹²⁶

Lest this argument be pushed too far, however, it should be noted that the central figure on the Fuller brooch at least seems somewhat distant from this Insular tradition associated with Aaron's flowering rod. Rather, the figure of Sight seems more closely related to examples of rod-holders in Eastern and Mediterranean art, from which the so-called 'Osiris pose' of Insular art has often been supposed to derive. In particular, the figure of Sight bears a remarkable resemblance to a womanly figure who holds two half-palmettes to form an initial T in an illustrated Beneventan manuscript of Vergil dating from the second quarter of the tenth century (fig. 34).¹²⁷ This Beneventan figure has the same centre-parting and downward-pointing ears, and, in an identical pose, bears plant stems that are similarly lobed, nicked, and interconnected. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell whether this Beneventan figure has been borrowed from earlier traditions of Vergil illustration, and it is perhaps more likely that in this case the artist has drawn upon other imagery, prompted by Vergil's vague reference to *Aeneas's nutrix*, 'Caieta'.¹²⁸ It is thus very difficult to tell whether the artist has drawn, for example, upon

¹²⁴ Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, lines 868–87 (ed. by Thompson, I, 340–41). Cf. above, n. 15.

¹²⁵ See the examples from Clonmacnois, Durrow, and Burton-in-Kendal cited above in n. 120; and Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London, 1997), pp. 62–66.

¹²⁶ Augustine, *De uidendo Deo*, ed. by Goldbacher, c. 51, p. 327, lines 8–9, and p. 328, lines 9–10. Cf. above, n. 104.

¹²⁷ Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, lat. 6, fol. 111^r. See P. Courcelle, 'La tradition antique dans les miniatures inédites d'un Virgile de Naples', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire (École Française de Rome)*, 56 (1939), 249–79, and H. Belting, *Studien zur beneventanischen Malerei* (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 137–43 and Plate LXXII, no. 172; cf. A. Grabar, *Les manuscrits grecs enluminés de provenance italienne (IXe–XIe siècles)*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, 8 (Paris, 1972), pp. 26–27 and 63. I am extremely grateful to Carol Farr for drawing my attention to this initial, and for her advice on the imagery of rod-holding in general.

¹²⁸ Vergil, *Aeneid*, Bk VII, lines 1–4, in *Virgil*, ed. by H. R. Fairclough, 2 vols, rev. edn (Cambridge, MA, 1934–35), II, 2–3. Courcelle argued convincingly that the Naples manuscript preserves certain vestiges of a late antique cycle of Vergil illustrations. The beginning of Book VII is missing, however, in the two principal illustrated Vergil manuscripts surviving from Late Antiquity; see D. H. Wright, *The Vatican Vergil: A Masterpiece of Late Antique Art* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), pp. 60–63 and 79–80, and D. H. Wright, *Codicological Notes on the Vergilius Romanus*, *Studi e testi*, 345 (Vatican City, 1992), p. 21.



Fig. 34. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, lat. 6, fol 111^r (Beneventan origin, s. X^{2/4}): Illuminated initial 'T' in an illustrated Beneventan manuscript of Vergil's works.

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the sort of secular flower-bearer who represents the month of May in some late antique and early medieval calendars,¹²⁹ or upon Italian depictions of saints bearing sprouting foliage,¹³⁰ or upon earlier Jewish, Greek, or Coptic examples of rod-holders in similar poses.¹³¹ The precise meaning of the twin plant stems on the Fuller brooch and the Alfred Jewel therefore remains a very open question. Do they symbolize salvation, as the connection with Psalm 90 might imply, or did they gain practical and worldly overtones in the hands of Alfred's craftsmen? The possibility should at least be raised that the twin plant stems on both Jewel and brooch might have acquired an enhanced significance, central to Alfred's Solomonic outlook, by representing the undesired power and wealth that should accompany the pursuit of wisdom.

Conclusion

Alfred's leading role in the design of various artefacts, subsequently created by his court craftsmen, entirely complemented his involvement in the composition and promotion of vernacular texts. Alfred pursued both these activities in order to ensure that, throughout his realm, power was exercised in accordance with wisdom, without any desire for the wealth that would undoubtedly accrue. Alfred thus claimed to be reversing the mistakes of the 850s and 860s, when the 'churches throughout England stood filled with treasures and books', and yet the decline in Latin standards had prevented contemporary 'servants of God' from following the Solomonic track pursued by their predecessors.¹³² In this light, the practical necessities of vernacular translation and of humble book production could be portrayed as positive virtues. In marked contrast to the many monarchical representations undertaken for Charles the Bald, Alfredian books were adorned only with occasional, purely decorative, illuminations, thus focussing attention solely upon the wisdom that they were rendering newly accessible in the vernacular.¹³³

¹²⁹ See J. C. Webster, *The Labors of the Months in Antique and Mediaeval Art* (Princeton, NJ, 1938), nos 22, 24–26, 28–29, 31, and 32, pp. 25–26, 37–39, 41–47, 49–53, and 129–34, with plates 10–12 and 14–16. Cf. also D. Levi, 'The Allegories of the Months in Classical Art', *Art Bulletin*, 23 (1941), 251–91 (pp. 260–62, with figs 1, 3, 6, 7, and 17).

¹³⁰ E. B. Garrison, *Studies in the History of Italian Medieval Painting*, 4 vols (Florence, 1961), iv, 198, fig. 150; Grabar, *Les manuscrits grecs*, plate 25, fig. 85.

¹³¹ See the material discussed by Farr, *The Book of Kells*, n. 63, pp. 97–98; cf. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols (New York, 1953–65), III, figs 999–1000, and II, 164–90.

¹³² Alfred's Version of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Sweet, p. 4, lines 8–18. Cf. Shippey, 'Wealth and Wisdom'.

¹³³ On the various manuscripts associated with Charles the Bald, see N. Staubach, *Rex Christianus: Hofkultur und Herrschaftspropaganda im Reich Karls des Kahlen*, vol. II, *Grundlegung der 'religion royale'*, Pictura et Poesis, II.2 (Cologne, 1993), pp. 221–81. The relationship between

The same considerations that lay behind this restraint in two-dimensional expression, however, also encouraged great creativity in the design and production of three-dimensional objects. As ‘the greatest treasure-giver of all kings’—as Bishop Wulfsige of Sherborne aptly describes him—Alfred seems to have adapted this most traditional of Anglo-Saxon royal functions to his own higher purposes, thus justifying such tangible wealthy display in a manner newly congruent with the pursuit of wisdom.¹³⁴ Alfred’s *aedificia nova* were edificatory. Treasures like the Fuller brooch and the Alfred Jewel were adorned with inventive iconographic schemes of unusual sophistication, in order to convey in tangible form the wisdom discussed at court and otherwise recorded in Alfred’s own texts. The Fuller brooch in particular would seem to present a coherent summary of much Alfredian philosophy, with the pursuit of wisdom depicted at its very heart. In order to reinforce this message, new practical forms of treasure were developed to fulfil novel functions—the æstels and the candle-lantern—both of which seem to have promoted the pursuit of wisdom by encouraging the act of reading. One wonders how many other lost Alfredian artefacts also served these higher purposes, including most notably the ring, sword, crown, and rod first included among the king’s regalia in the new coronation *ordo* probably compiled during Alfred’s reign.¹³⁵

The unusually king-centred nature of all this written and material evidence should be ascribed, therefore, to the critically important exemplary role that Alfred himself assumed in his attempt to revive wisdom through the promotion of vernacular literacy. Whether translating from Latin or liaising with his craftsmen, Alfred was striving not only to satisfy his own restless curiosity, but also to encourage others with a relentless zeal typical of late beginners. The illiteracy of his officials presented Alfred with a specific audience, who had to be inspired by their king’s own example. As an inventive translator and a practical inventor, a giver of manuscripts and treasures alike, Alfred seems to have extracted the very maximum potential from his chosen role. At Alfred’s court, one senses, imitation was indeed the sincerest form of flattery.¹³⁶

Carolingian and Alfredian aesthetic priorities clearly warrants further investigation; Herbert L. Kessler, “*Facies bibliothecae revelata*”: Carolingian Art as Spiritual Seeing’, *Settimane*, 41 (1993), 533–94, might be taken as a useful point of departure.

¹³⁴ D. Yerkes, ‘The Full Text of the Metrical Preface to Wærferth’s Old English Translation of Gregory’s *Dialogues*’, *Speculum*, 55 (1979), 505–13 (p. 513).

¹³⁵ J. L. Nelson, ‘The Second English *Ordo*’, in her *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), pp. 361–70 (pp. 361–67).

¹³⁶ My findings throughout this piece are placed in the wider context of Alfredian kingship and ninth-century West Saxon court culture in the published version of my thesis, *The Political Thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

Papal Court Culture during the Pontificate of Zacharias (AD 741–52)

JOHN OSBORNE

Because of the important role of Pope Gregory I (590–604) and the Roman church in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and the subsequent English devotion to the shrine of St Peter, Rome and the papal court loomed large in the ecclesiastical life of the English church.¹ From Wilfrid, Bishop of York, to Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, many English churchmen made the long journey south to Rome, in the hope that their petitions would be granted a favourable hearing. During their moments of leisure, many also spent some time engaged in ‘shopping’, for Rome was ever a source of material objects not available at home. For Benedict Biscop in the late years of the seventh century, this took the form of books, painted icons, and whatever else was necessary to furnish and equip his monastic communities at Wearmouth and Jarrow,² whereas Henry of Blois, at least according to John of Salisbury, was more interested in the city as a source of classical antiquities, some of which he is reported

¹ For an overview of links between Britain and continental Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries see Rosamond McKitterick, ‘England and the Continent’, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, c. 700–c. 900, ed. by R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 64–84. More specific studies of the impact of Rome on the Anglo-Saxon church include Bertram Colgrave, ‘Pilgrimages to Rome in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries’, in *Studies in Language, Literature and Culture of the Middle Ages and Later*, ed. by E. B. Atwood and A. Hill (Austin, 1969), pp. 156–72; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede* (Jarrow Lecture, 1994); and Alan Thacker, ‘Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 59–84.

² For Benedict Biscop’s ‘shopping trips’, see Paul Meyvaert, ‘Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (1979), 63–77. The dedications of Wearmouth and Jarrow to Saints Peter and Paul respectively are, of course, not without significance.

to have shipped home to Winchester—thus initiating a long tradition of collecting that would reach its apogee only in the eighteenth century.³ In this the English were of course not alone. Rome served western Europe as a source for many things, from liturgical practices to architectural models. It may also have served as a model for political and ecclesiastical court culture, particularly in the period of the early Middle Ages, when few other models of this sort were readily available or, at least, easily accessible. The focus of this essay will be the papal court during the pontificate of Zacharias (AD 741–52). Zacharias has been chosen because he stands out among pre-Carolingian pontiffs as having done much to establish both the political power of the papacy and also a locus for that power in an actual physical setting of a ‘court’.⁴ He was also one of the first pontiffs to issue his own coinage.⁵ My intention is to bring together the evidence of both written texts and material culture to compose a picture of court culture in Rome towards the middle of the eighth century.

The principal source for the pontificate of Zacharias is his *vita* in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which devotes considerable attention to his reign, a period of some ten years, three months, and fifteen days.⁶ The first thing we are told is that he was of Greek origin, the son of a certain Polychronius—and it is worth noting that Zacharias was the last of a

³ John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, ed. by R. Poole (Oxford, 1927), p. 81; see also Pietro Fedele, ‘Sul commercio delle antichità in Roma nel XII secolo’, *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 32 (1909), 465–70.

⁴ For the importance of the pontificate of Zacharias in the emergence of the Papal State, see especially Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 49–60. Noble argues that this pope ‘functioned as the head of an independent state under the patronage of St. Peter’ (p. 52). Other surveys of his reign include Domenico Bartolini, *Di S. Zaccaria Papa e degli anni del suo pontificato* (Regensburg, 1879); Peter Llewellyn, *Rome in the Dark Ages* (London, 1971), pp. 202–07; and Jeffrey Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (London, 1979), pp. 226–31.

⁵ For coins bearing the monogram of Zacharias, although retaining the effigy of the Byzantine emperor, see Michael O’Hara, ‘A Find of Byzantine Silver from the Mint of Rome for the Period A.D. 641–752’, *Revue suisse de numismatique*, 64 (1985), 105–40 (p. 113, nos 30, 31); Cécile Morrisson and J.-N. Barrandon, ‘La trouvaille de monnaies d’argent byzantines de Rome (VII–VIII siècles): analyse et chronologie’, *Revue numismatique*, 30 (1988), 149–65; Patrizia Calabria and Giuseppe De Spirito, ‘La zecca di Roma tra fine VII ed VIII secolo: una vexata quaestio’, in *Acten des XII. internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie* (Bonn, 22–28 September 1991), *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband, 20 (Münster, 1995), pp. 603–08. For a general discussion of early medieval papal coinage: Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, vol. I, *The Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 259–66.

⁶ Le *Liber pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols (Paris, 1886–92), I, 426–39. For a recent English translation, see *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, trans. by Raymond Davis (Liverpool, 1992), pp. 35–50.

series of Greek-speaking popes whose reigns span much of the late seventh and early eighth centuries.⁷ There can be little doubt that this was a time of some considerable importance for the history of the papacy. The historic links with Byzantium were in the process of breaking down, principally over the theological issue of Iconoclasm, but compounded by Emperor Leo III's annexation of the papal estates in southern Italy and Sicily.⁸ Increasingly the bishops of Rome were being required to intervene, not merely on behalf of the beleaguered citizens of the city of Rome, but also to protect the other remnants of imperial Italy from Lombard encroachment—and indeed much of Zacharias's *vita* is devoted to his considerable, and initially very effective, efforts in this regard, and to his successful interventions with the Lombard kings Liutprand and Ratchis. At the same time, the papacy was beginning to look beyond the Lombards in search of other political allies in western Europe. While the Roman bishops had long maintained an official *apocrisarius* at the imperial court in Constantinople, Zacharias was the first pontiff to appoint an 'apostolic legate' to the Frankish kingdom, his choice falling on the Anglo-Saxon missionary, Boniface.⁹

After a lengthy discussion of the Pope's political dealings with the Lombards, the *Liber Pontificalis* biographer next provides an account of some of Zacharias's more notable patronage activities. Taking pride of place in this regard is his work at the Lateran palace, which he partially rebuilt and thoroughly restored. The passage is an important one, and merits citation:

In the Lateran patriarchate [. . .] he newly built a triclinium and adorned it with varieties of marble, glass, metal, mosaic and painting. He adorned both St Sylvester's oratory and the portico with sacred images; and he gave orders that all his wealth should be brought inside it by the hands of Ambrose the *primicerius notariorum*. He built from the ground up in front of the Lateran office a portico and a tower, where he installed bronze doors and railings, and in front of the doors he adorned it with a figure of the Saviour; making use of the stairs which went upwards to the top of that tower he constructed there a triclinium and bronze railings, and there he painted a representation of the world and decorated it

⁷ Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, pp. 270–71; Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, pp. 185–88. For the growth of the Greek-speaking religious community in Rome, see especially Jean-Marie Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne* (Brussels, 1983), pp. 9–51, and Sansterre 'Le monachisme byzantin à Rome', *Settimane*, 34 (1988), 701–46.

⁸ For the reorganization of the economy of Rome under Zacharias and his predecessor, Gregory III, which this seizure made necessary, see Federico Marazzi, 'Il conflitto fra Leone III Isaurico e il papato fra il 725 e il 733, e il "definitivo" inizio del medioevo a Roma: un' ipotesi in discussione', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 59 (1991), 231–57.

⁹ Judith Herrin, 'Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. by J. Shepard and S. Franklin (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 91–107 (p. 95); for an overview of Zacharias's relations with Pippin, see Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, pp. 65–71.

with various verses. He restored the whole patriarchate almost like new—he had found the place very poverty-stricken.¹⁰

Almost every detail of this passage is worthy of some comment, but perhaps the most telling statement comes at the end, where the biographer observes that, at the time of Zacharias's election to the papacy, the Lateran Palace had been 'poverty-stricken'. (The Latin reads 'in magnam penuriam'.) The structure was, of course, many centuries old, having been first granted to the bishops of Rome by Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century.¹¹ But in the first decade of the eighth century, it had been definitively abandoned by Pope John VII (705–07), who constructed an *episcopium* within the area of the former imperial palace of the Roman emperors on the Palatine Hill, above his favourite church of S. Maria Antiqua.¹² It is difficult to determine whether John's transfer of the papal residence was a deliberate political act, designed to establish pontifical power in the former seat of imperial authority, or whether it was prompted by more personal considerations. On other issues, John VII seems to have been reluctant to overtly antagonize the reigning emperor, Justinian II;¹³ and it is perhaps worth recalling that the Palatine had been, after all, his boyhood home, with his father, Plato, the imperial official charged with its upkeep. Equally problematic is the issue of the location of the papal residence under John VII's immediate successors. The subsequent papal biographies in the *Liber Pontificalis* are silent on this question, and this has prompted commentators such as Louis Duchesne and Paolo Verzone to suggest that the Lateran remained largely abandoned until the restoration campaign initiated by Zacharias.¹⁴ Some period of abandonment may also help to explain the Pope's 'rediscovery'

¹⁰ *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, trans. Davis, p. 44; for the Latin original: *Liber pontificalis*, I, 432. See also Bartolini, *Di S. Zaccaria Papa*, pp. 208–13.

¹¹ For a general survey of its history: Philippe Lauer, *Le Palais de Latran* (Paris, 1911); Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, AD 300–850* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 174–76 and 256–57.

¹² *Liber pontificalis*, I, 385; Lauer, *Palais de Latran*, p. 91. For the 'episcopium' of John VII see Andrea Augenti, *Il Palatino nel medioevo: archeologia e topografia (secoli VI–XIII)* (Rome, 1996), pp. 56–58.

¹³ For example, on the matter of papal approval of the canons of the Quinisext Council of 692, earlier refused by Pope Sergius I: see Jean-Marie Sansterre, 'Jean VII (705–707): Idéologie pontificale et réalisme politique', in *Rayonnement grec: Hommages à Charles Delvoye*, ed. by L. Hadermann-Misguich and G. Raepsaet (Brussels, 1982), pp. 377–88. For the implications of the facial type of Christ employed in the decorations of S. Maria Antiqua, see Per Jonas Nordhagen, 'The Frescoes of John VII (A.D. 705–707) in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome', *AIRN*, 3 (1968), 43–54; and James Breckenridge, 'Evidence for the Nature of Relations between Pope John VII and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 65 (1972), 364–74.

¹⁴ *Liber pontificalis*, I, 438, n. 38; Paolo Verzone, 'La distruzione dei palazzi imperiali di Roma e di Ravenna e la ristrutturazione del Palazzo Lateranense nel IX secolo nei rapporti con

of an important relic, the head of St George, which he promptly donated to the church of S. Giorgio in Velabro.¹⁵ This restoration campaign was clearly extensive, and it is a great pity that no trace of it has survived into the modern period—with the possible exception of a series of fragmentary wall paintings discovered at the beginning of our century by Philippe Lauer in the sub-structures beneath the chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum.¹⁶ It would be interesting, for example, to know more about the great world map with its accompanying verse inscriptions, the possible political significance and subsequent considerable influence of which have been recently discussed by Marcia Kupfer.¹⁷ Such maps had been, in the past, and would again be, in the future, associated more with expressions of temporal authority than with matters of the faith—and it is perhaps instructive that it was placed in a *triclinium* (in other words, a secular, not a religious, space). And thus, while nothing is known of the map apart from that brief mention in Zacharias's *vita*, it is tempting to see it as the first of a long line of visual statements about temporal power with which the Lateran Palace would be decorated over the course of the Middle Ages, just as the very construction of spaces like *triclinia* signifies new concerns about what might be called the 'non-liturgical' activities and the rituals of court life.¹⁸ Also tantalizing is the mention of a new portico, complete with bronze doors, adjacent to which the Pope placed an image of the Saviour—in other words an 'icon' of Christ. Is there an echo here of the Great Palace of the emperors in Constantinople, and of its principal entrance, the Chalke (Bronze) Gate?¹⁹ This was of

quello di Costantinopoli', in *Roma e l'Età Carolingia*, Istituto nazionale di archeologia e storia dell'arte (Rome, 1976), pp. 39–54 (p. 40); and Gabriella Delfini, 'Contributo alla storia del Laterano', in *Roma e l'Età Carolingia*, pp. 223–27.

¹⁵ *Liber pontificalis*, I, 434. See also Bartolini, *Di S. Zaccaria Papa*, pp. 420–42.

¹⁶ Philippe Lauer, 'Les fouilles du "Sancta Sanctorum" au Latran', *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 20 (1900), 251–87; Josef Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1917), pp. 148–53 and pl. 141.4. For the use of palaeography to suggest a dating of these murals to the pontificate of Zacharias, see John Osborne, 'Textiles and Their Painted Imitations in Early Medieval Rome', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 60 (1992), 309–51 (pp. 344–45).

¹⁷ Marcia Kupfer, 'Medieval World Maps: Embedded Images, Interpretative Frames', *Word & Image*, 10 (1994), 262–88 (pp. 267–68). See also Jürgen Schulz, 'Jacopo de' Barbari's View of Venice: Map Making, City Views, and Moralized Geography before the year 1500', *Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978), 425–74 (p. 448).

¹⁸ For the political implications of papal *triclinia*, see Irving Lavin, 'The House of the Lord: Aspects of the Role of Palace Triclinia in the Architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', *Art Bulletin*, 44 (1962), 1–27 (pp. 12–15).

¹⁹ The parallel to the Chalke Gate has been suggested by Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 120–21; and Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, p. 175.

course the spot from which, only a few years earlier in the year 726, a famous icon of Christ the Saviour may have been unceremoniously taken down and destroyed by the Byzantine emperor Leo III, the opening salvo in his war against religious imagery.²⁰ One suspects that the significance of this combination was not lost on a contemporary viewer—nor indeed on any reader of Zacharias’s *vita*—and the Pope’s action must have been intended, on one level, to reinforce the Roman church’s profound opposition to the new Byzantine policy of Iconoclasm. But there may have been a deeper political significance here as well. In placing these visual ‘signs’ at the entrance to the Lateran, Zacharias invited a comparison between his residence and that of the emperors of Byzantium, thus laying claim, by virtue of association, to some measure of the imperial dignity. And the Lateran had begun its life, after all, as an *imperial* palace. How deliberate a move this was—and how it was interpreted by contemporary observers—are difficult issues to assess, although it should perhaps be remembered that within a decade or two the papal chancery at the Lateran would produce the famous Donation of Constantine, a document far less subtle in its political pretensions.²¹ Given Zacharias’s obvious interest in bronzework, it is interesting to speculate that this may also have been

²⁰ For the Chalke Gate and the famous icon of Christos Chalkites, see Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959), pp. 108–42; and Ioanna Zervou Tognazzi, ‘Propilei e Chalké, ingresso principale del Palazzo di Costantinopoli’, in *Bisanzio e l’Occidente: arte, archeologia, storia. Studi in onore di Fernanda de’ Maffei*, ed. by Claudia Barsanti (Rome, 1996), pp. 33–59. The historical accuracy of the supposed destruction of the icon by Emperor Leo III has been recently called into question by Marie-France Auzépy, ‘La destruction de l’icône du Christ de la Chalcé de Léon III: propagande ou réalité?’, *Byzantion*, 60 (1990), 445–92, who argues that all contemporary references to such an event must be discarded as either forgeries or later interpolations. She concludes that the icon of Christ was first placed on the Chalke Gate by Empress Irene c. 800, at which time the story of Leo III’s earlier destruction was simply invented, primarily to shore up opposition to any renewed sympathy for iconoclasm. However, while Auzépy does raise serious questions about the possible accuracy of the events reported by Theophanes and others, she can not prove that these reports are actually in error, and thus the question must remain open. Zacharias’s action might possibly be seen as constituting evidence in support of the traditional view, as there is no previous tradition in Rome of setting up icons in this fashion on public display. For the most recent discussions, published after the completion of this paper, see Leslie Brubaker, ‘The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 23 (1999), 258–85, and John Haldon and Bryan Ward-Perkins, ‘Evidence from Rome for the Image of Christ on the Chalke Gate in Constantinople’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 23 (1999), 286–96.

²¹ *Das Constitutum Constantini*, ed. by Horst Fuhrmann, MGH, *Fontes*, 10 (Hannover, 1968), in which Constantine is recorded as having given to the papacy ‘[. . .] palatium imperii nostri Lateranense, quod omnibus in toto orbe terrarum praefertur atque praecellet palatiis [.]’ (p. 87, lines 219–20).

the moment when the great papal collection of classical bronze statuary was gathered together to enhance the exterior of the Lateran Palace. This collection would remain at the Lateran until moved to its current home on the Capitoline, a process initiated in the late fifteenth century by Pope Sixtus IV. It included a number of famous Roman pieces, including the Spinario (or Thornplucker) and the Etruscan she-wolf, both still today in the collection of the Capitoline Museum, as well as the larger-than-life equestrian bronze statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. These became important sights, commented on by numerous medieval visitors to Rome, all of whom seem to have recognized their ancient origins.²² But what is most interesting is that the Lateran bronzes were regarded in later centuries as symbols of power and authority—imperial power now vested in the office of the papacy—and there is no reason to think that such considerations were not present from the outset, and indeed they may well have prompted the establishment of the Lateran collection in the first place. Although they are not mentioned in any known eighth-century source, the bronzes must certainly have been brought to the Lateran about this time, as otherwise it is difficult to explain Charlemagne's efforts at the end of the century to put together a similar collection, including an equestrian bronze statue of Theoderic, taken from Ravenna, at his 'Lateran' Palace at Aquisgranus.²³ Their political significance was certainly not difficult for Carolingian observers to fathom.

Having thus established a physical setting appropriate to the burgeoning political aspirations of the Roman papacy—a setting whose physical aspects would also be of particular concern to later eighth-century popes such as Hadrian I and Leo III, who would continue the campaigns of refurbishment and repair—Zacharias next began to promote activities and practices that were associated with 'court' life. There are a number of clues which suggest that the Lateran became an important centre of literary activity, and also of book production, with the aim of making reading materials more widely accessible. It is an interesting testimony to the continuing Greek presence in the ranks of the Roman clergy that this literary activity included translations from Latin into Greek, most notably of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory I. According to the compiler of the *Liber Pontificalis*, this translation was undertaken by Zacharias himself, in order to make this important text available to the 'plures qui Latinam ignorant'.²⁴ The earliest surviving copy, today in the Vatican Library (Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. gr. 1666), was produced in a Greek-language scriptorium at Rome and has a colophon

²² Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, pp. 192–97; and Ingo Herklotz, 'Der Campus Lateranensis in Mittelalter', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 22 (1985), 1–43.

²³ Herklotz, 'Der Campus Lateranensis im Mittelalter', pp. 34 and 42. For the Aachen 'Lateran', and the parallel Carolingian collection of bronze statuary: Felix Thürlemann, 'Die Bedeutung der Aachener Theoderich-Statue für Karl den Grossen (801) und bei Walahfrid Strabo', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 59 (1977), 25–65; and Mario D'Onofrio, *Roma e Aquisgrana* (Rome, 1983), pp. 194–97.

²⁴ *Liber pontificalis*, I, 435. See also Bartolini, *Di S. Zaccaria Papa*, pp. 563–66.

dating it to the year 800.²⁵ Zacharias's name appears as an acrostic in its verse preface.²⁶ If nothing else, this constitutes a fascinating insight into the cosmopolitan character of the papal court in the first half of the eighth century, and provides a useful confirmation of the observation in Stephanus's life of Wilfrid that the members of the papal court conversed with one other in Greek.²⁷ Zacharias's translation was certainly widely circulated. By the middle of the ninth century it was known to the great Byzantine scholar and bibliophile, Photios, who refers to it in his *Bibliotheka*.²⁸

The *Liber Pontificalis* also records the Pope's gift of books from his own library to the church of St Peter's,²⁹ and at least one other senior member of his clergy was prompted to make a similar gift, recorded in an elaborate marble inscription which still survives. This was the presbyter Gregorius, the priest in charge of the titular church of San Clemente, whose 'small and insignificant gifts' (his words) comprised a series of manuscripts of the scriptures, enumerated by name: the Octateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, and so on. Coupled with his use of the plural ('books'), this should probably be taken to mean that the donation comprised a series of individual codices, and not a complete Bible in a single volume. The record of this gift, naming Zacharias as the reigning pontiff, was, for whatever reason, salvaged from the original early Christian basilica of San Clemente when that structure was abandoned at the beginning of the twelfth century, and then incorporated into the high altar of the new basilica which rose above on the same site—and which of course still stands today. There it was discovered in 1725, during the course of a restoration undertaken by Cardinal Alessandro Albani, and the modern visitor will find it set in the wall to the left as one enters through the main portal from the atrium.³⁰ Sadly, none of the 'books' in question appear to have

²⁵ Pierre Battifol, 'Libraries byzantines à Rome' *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 8 (1888), 297–308; I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* (Leiden, 1981), p. 6; and John Osborne, 'The Use of Painted Initials by Greek and Latin Scriptoria in Carolingian Rome', *Gesta*, 29 (1990), 76–85 (pp. 77–79).

²⁶ S. G. Mercati, 'Sull'epigramma acrostico: Premesso alla versione greca di S. Zaccaria papa del "Liber Dialogorum" di S. Gregorio Magno', *Bessarione*, 35 (1919), 67–72.

²⁷ *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), p. 112: 'Tunc inter se graecizantes et subridentes, nos autem celantes, multa loqui coeperunt [...]. The court in question is that of Pope John VI (701–05).

²⁸ Photius, *Bibliothèque*, trans. by René Henry, 9 vols (Paris, 1989–91), vii, 209.

²⁹ *Liber pontificalis*, I, 432.

³⁰ Angelo Silvagni, *Monumenta Epigraphica Christiana Saeculo XIII Antiquiora*, vol. I, *Roma* (Vatican City, 1943), tab. XIV, no. 2; Nicolette Gray, 'The Paleography of Latin Inscriptions in the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Centuries in Italy', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 16 (1948), 38–167 (p. 51 no. 8); and Edvige Smiraglia, 'Donazione di libri sacri alla chiesa di S. Clemente', *Vetera Christianorum*, 26 (1989), 351–60. The same Gregorius is a signatory to the acts of two councils held by Zacharias, in 743 and 745: see *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. by J. Mansi (Florence, 1766), XII, cols 368 and 380.

survived. Other churches may also have received similar gifts, although the munificence of the papal court under Zacharias and his successors was not restricted to the city of Rome. We have, for example, the letter from Pope Paul I (757–67) to the Frankish king Pippin which accompanied the gift of a wide selection of books, including liturgical texts, treatises on grammar and geometry, and works by Aristotle and pseudo-Dionysus—not to mention a mechanical clock.³¹ The Frankish kings were by no means alone in viewing Rome as an important source for books and other objects associated with what we might call ‘high’ culture—and this seems an appropriate place to recall that among those travelling to Rome with similar intentions in the mid-eighth century was Ælberht, master of the cathedral school at York, and after 767 the city’s bishop. His pupil Alcuin records that these journeys were undertaken

with joy, led by love of holy wisdom and hope
of finding new books and studies there
to bring back with him.³²

Other forms of cultural patronage on the part of the pontiff and his court are perhaps less easy to document. There was certainly some concern for the upkeep of both the city’s urban churches and its suburban cemeteries, although the *Liber Pontificalis* merely notes this activity without providing much in the way of specific examples.³³

³¹ *Codex Carolinus*, ed. by W. Gundlach, MGH, Epp., 3, 2nd edn (Berlin, 1957), p. 529, letter 24: ‘Direximus itaque excellentissimae praecellentiae vestrae et libros, quantos reperire potuimus: id est antiphonale et responsale, insimul artem gramaticam Aristolis, Dionisii Ariopagitum geometricam, orthografiam, grammaticam, omnes Greco eloquio scriptas, nec non et horologium nocturnum.’ For an analysis of the role of Rome as a purveyor of books see Armando Petrucci, ‘Libro, scrittura e scuola’, *Settimane*, 19 (1972), 313–37 [reprinted in English translation in *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, trans. by Charles Radding (New Haven, 1995), pp. 59–76]; Donald Bullough, ‘Roman Books and Carolingian “Renovatio”’, in *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, ed. by Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History*, 14 (Oxford, 1977), pp. 23–50 [reprinted in Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 1–38]; and David Dumville, ‘The Importation of Mediterranean Manuscripts into Theodore’s England’, in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on His Life and Influence*, ed. by Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 96–119.

³² Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, ed. by Peter Godman (Oxford, 1982), vv. 1455–57. For Alcuin’s own contacts with Rome, see Simon Coates, ‘The Bishop as Benefactor and Civic Patron: Alcuin, York, and Episcopal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 529–58 (pp. 547–51).

³³ The traditional view, that there was almost no building activity in ‘Dark Age’ Rome prior to the Carolingian *renovatio*, has now been thoroughly discounted: see Robert Coates-Stephens, ‘Dark Age Architecture in Rome’, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 65 (1997), 177–232.

One quite spectacular example, however, has been revealed by archaeology. The 1900 excavation of the church of S. Maria Antiqua brought to light a small chapel at the sanctuary end of the left aisle, dedicated to Saints Quiricus (Cyr) and Julitta, a mother and son martyred for their faith at Tarsus, and their *passio* is the subject of a rather well preserved narrative cycle on the chapel's side walls.³⁴ But the most interesting mural was on the end wall, beneath a large image of the Crucifixion (fig. 35). Here the chapel's two patron saints are shown presenting two eighth-century historical figures to the enthroned Madonna and Child. At the far left is our pope, Zacharias, identified by inscription, his head framed by a square 'halo', signifying a portrait. He is shown holding a codex. His counterpart at the far right is one of his court officials, the *primicerius defensorum* Theodotus, also with square 'halo', who offers a small model of the chapel.³⁵ The existence of a long series of early Christian and medieval donor portraits provides a broader context for such images, thus permitting some useful observations. To begin with, this is our earliest extant example of a portrait of a reigning pope who is *not* the principal donor. It is perhaps significant that he holds his book at an angle (possibly implying an offertory act?), but the traditional signifier of patronage—the model of the object or building being donated—is, once again for the first time in the arts of early medieval Rome, clearly in the hands of another person, and a layperson to boot. Indeed, this is the first surviving portrait in Rome of a 'non-cleric' since the final phase of tomb portraiture in the Roman Catacombs, datable to the early years of the sixth century; and elsewhere in the chapel Theodotus is shown again, accompanied by his wife and children. Admittedly, he is no insignificant figure. It is known from other sources that he was a prominent member of the Roman nobility, a former *dux*, and the

New churches attributed to the pontificate of Zacharias are S. Eusebio and S. Gregorio Nazianzeno (pp. 195–98). For S. Eusebio, see also Bartolini, *Di S. Zaccaria Papa*, pp. 557–60; and Gemma Fuciello, 'La chiesa medievale di S. Eusebio all'Esquilino', *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura*, n.s., 21 (1993), 15–28.

³⁴ Recent studies of the Theodotus chapel include Hans Belting, 'Eine Privatkapelle im frühmittelalterlichen Rom', *DOP*, 41 (1987), 55–69; Natalia Teteriatnikov, 'For Whom Is Theodotus Praying? An Interpretation of the Program of the Private Chapel in S. Maria Antiqua', *Cahiers archéologiques*, 41 (1993), 37–46; and Arno Rettner, 'Dreimal Theodotus? Stifterbild und Grabstiftung in der Theodotus-Kapelle von Santa Maria Antiqua in Rom', in *Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn: Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, ed. by H.-R. Meier, C. Jäggi, and P. Büttner (Berlin, 1995), pp. 31–46.

³⁵ For this mural: W. de Grüneisen, 'Studi iconografici in Santa Maria Antiqua: I ritratti di papa Zaccaria e di Teodoto il primicerio', *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 29 (1906), 88–95; Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien*, pp. 685–87 and pls 179 and 181; Gerhart Ladner, *Die Papstbildnisse des Altertums und des Mittelalters*, 3 vols (Vatican City, 1941–84), I, 99–106, and III, 23–25; and Pietro Romanelli and Per Jonas Nordhagen, *Santa Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 1964), pp. 36–38, pls 22 and 23.



Fig. 35. Madonna and Child enthroned with saints and donors, Chapel of SS. Quiricus and Julitta, S. Maria Antiqua, Rome. (photo: ICCD, Rome)

uncle of the future pope, Hadrian I.³⁶ There is perhaps no more dramatic evidence than this to support Thomas Noble's contention that the second quarter of the eighth century witnessed a fusion of the previously separate ecclesiastical and military elites.³⁷ And at the same time, the mural offers tangible proof that the court circle around Zacharias was engaged in a range of patronage activities, of a sort previously associated only with the pontiff himself.

The activities of Pope Zacharias as diplomat and civic administrator, as negotiator with Lombard kings and founder of a new network of papally administered agricultural estates (the *domus cultae*),³⁸ have long been recognized by historians. What has been less recognized, but may be equally significant for the emergence of the papal state in the mid-eighth century, is the range of cultural activities, many of them with scarcely disguised political overtones, that were undertaken by the Pope and the other members of his court newly re-established in the refurbished Lateran Palace. It is this papal court, with its painted *triclinia*, bronze metalwork, and apparent concern for the provision of books, that would inspire the next generations of northern visitors to Rome and serve as one of the primary models for political and ecclesiastical courts in the Frankish kingdom and beyond.

³⁶ *Liber pontificalis*, I, 486. Theodotus is also named as donor in the 755 dedication inscription of the *diaconia* (welfare centre) of S. Angelo in Pescheria: see J. Lestocquoy, 'Administration de Rome et diaconies du VIIe au IXe siècle', *Rivista d'Archeologia Cristiana*, 7 (1930), 261–98 (pp. 281–82 and fig. 2); and Gray, 'Paleography of Latin Inscriptions', pp. 51–52 (no. 9).

³⁷ Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, pp. 187–88. For the importance of lay participation in the administration of the *diaconiae*, see Federico Marazzi, 'Roma, il Lazio, il Mediterraneo: relazioni fra economia e politica dal VII al IX secolo', in *La storia economica di Roma nell'alto medioevo alla luce dei recenti scavi archeologici*, ed. by Lidia Paroli and Paolo Delogu (Florence, 1993), pp. 267–85 (pp. 278–80).

³⁸ For the *domus cultae*, see Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, pp. 247–48; Federico Marazzi, 'L'insediamento nel suburbio di Roma fra IV e VIII secolo', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 94 (1988), 251–313 (pp. 305–08); Neil Christie, *Three South Etrurian Churches: Santa Cornelia, Santa Rufina and San Liberato*, Archaeological Monographs of the British School at Rome, 4 (London, 1991), pp. 6–8; Marazzi, 'Roma, il Lazio, il Mediterraneo', pp. 275–78; *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, trans. Davis, pp. 31–34; and Federico Marazzi, *I 'patrimonia sanctae romanae ecclesiae' nel Lazio (secoli IV–X): struttura amministrativa e prassi gestionali* (Rome, 1998), pp. 235–61.

Beyond the *De Ceremoniis*

ROSEMARY MORRIS

If asked to name the two most important sources for Byzantine court ceremonial of the ninth and tenth centuries, most medievalists would, quite rightly, cite the text commonly known as the *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* (commonly attributed to Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos who, almost certainly, did not write it) and the two works of the tenth-century bishop, Liutprand of Cremona, an Ottonian emissary, which deal with his visits to Constantinople. The *Antapodosis* (commonly translated as *Tit for Tat*) describes an embassy in 949–50 and the *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana* deals with one in 968–69. No one has yet suggested that Liutprand was not the author of these texts.¹

¹ *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, ed. by J. J. Reiske, 2 vols, CSHB (Bonn, 1829–30); *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, Le Livre des Cérémonies*, ed. by A. Vogt, 4 vols (Paris, 1935–40) (henceforward, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. by Reiske or ed. by Vogt). These works will become much more familiar when the partial French translation of Vogt has been ‘meshed in’ with the parts he did not translate, up to now only available in the Greek/Latin version of Reiske. This task is nearing publication by a team of Australian scholars. For Liutprand, *Liutprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by P. Chiesa, CCCM, 156 (Turnhout, 1998); *Antapodosis*, pp. 1–150; *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, pp. 185–218. English translation of both works in Liutprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. by F. A. Wright, ed. by J. J. Norwich (London, 1993); Latin edition of the *Relatio* with English translation and notes in Liutprand of Cremona, *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. by B. Scott (London, 1993). References will be to Chiesa’s edition. On the ‘non-authorship’ of the *De Ceremoniis* by Constantine Porphyrogenetos, see I. Ševčenko, ‘Re-reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus’, in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. by J. Shepard and S. Franklin, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies Publications, 1 (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 167–95. For Liutprand of Cremona, see J. Koder and T. Weber, *Liutprand von Cremona in Konstantinopel*,

The value of considering these two sets of texts together has, of course, been that they are roughly contemporaneous. Liutprand's reports of Byzantine court ceremonial—imperial automata of singing birds and roaring lions, the emperor being raised on a throne worked by hydraulic pressure, the bowing and scraping, the feasting complete with the loathsome *garum* or fish sauce, the petty triumphs and disasters of one's *placement* at table, and the outstanding snobbery and sheer unadulterated nastiness of the court officials—can be used to flesh out the somewhat dry bones of the *De Ceremoniis*, which appears to tell us what *should* happen on a vast number of ceremonial occasions, but not often what actually *did*.²

Not too much space should be expended on these well-known works in the present context, but it is important to mention some recent discoveries which have been made about texts traditionally considered part and parcel of the *De Ceremoniis* and recent discussion about the nature of the main text itself. The three texts concerning the organization of military expeditions, attributed to Constantine Porphyrogenitos and published by Reiske as an Appendix to the first volume of his edition of the *De Ceremoniis*, can now be shown not to belong to it at all, and, more significantly, to be of later tenth-century origin than the main text. This discovery not only destroys the argument that the extremely messy construction of parts of the *De Ceremoniis* was due to the activities of incompetent thirteenth-century copyists, but also provides us with another, independent source for Byzantine ceremonial.³

Byzantina Vindobonensia, 13 (Vienna, 1980); M. Rentschler, *Liutprand von Cremona: eine Studie zum ost-westlichen Kulturgefälle im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt, 1981); K. Leyser, 'Ends and Means in Liutprand of Cremona', in *Byzantium and the West c. 850–1204: Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, 1984*, ed. by J. D. Howard-Johnston, *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 12 (1988), 119–43; J. N. Sutherland, 'The Mission to Constantinople in 968 and Liutprand of Cremona', *Traditio*, 31 (1975), 55–81.

² See Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, ed. by Chiesa, Bk. VII, cc. 5, 8–9, pp. 147 and 148–49; *Relatio*, ed. by Chiesa, cc. 11–12, 20, pp. 192 and 196. On the automata, see G. Brett, 'The Automata in the Byzantine "Throne of Solomon"', *Speculum*, 29 (1954), 477–87. Some of them (a golden tree; two lions; gryphons and organs) were, according to the *Chronicle of Theophanes continuatus*, melted down by Emperor Michael III and reconstructed on the orders of Constantine Porphyrogenitos, see Brett, 'Automata', p. 482.

³ See Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. by Reiske, I, Appendix. For groundwork on the establishment of the structure of the *De Ceremoniis*, see J. B. Bury, 'The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenitus', *English Historical Review*, 22 (1907), 209–27 and 417–39. Important new insights into the work in A. Moffatt, 'The Master of Ceremonies' Bottom Drawer: The Unfinished State of the *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitos', *Byzantinoslavica*, 56 (1995), 377–88 (esp. pp. 378–79). The texts on military expeditions are ed. by J. F. Haldon, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus: Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, CFHB, series Vindobonensis, 28 (Vienna, 1990); see pp. 35–77 for an analysis of the nature of these texts and their manuscript tradition.

In addition, the discovery of manuscripts of the *De Ceremoniis* 'proper', unknown to Reiske or Vogt, is also helping to elucidate the internal relationship of the material contained in the work, usually divided into two Books.⁴ Book I begins with a generalized description of a procession from the Great Palace to the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, followed by detailed protocols for processions on Easter Sunday, the Feast of the Birth of the Virgin, the Annunciation, and other great liturgical feasts; the acclamations of the demes (the formal Byzantine cheerleaders and their followers); descriptions of various religious ceremonies in which the emperor took part; and ceremonies in the Hippodrome including chariot racing and the celebration of the vintage.⁵ Book II has a Preface followed by a general opening section on the duties of the *papias* (the gate-keeper of the palace), then accounts of appointments to senior ranks in the imperial court, dedications of churches, bathing in the bath at the religious complex of the Church of the Theotokos at Blachernai, ceremonies in the Magnaura reception room, and protocols for addressing foreign rulers plus all sorts of scissors-and-paste additions from earlier periods.⁶ At the end of Book II of the *De Ceremoniis* were appended three longer works: the so-called *Kleterologion* of Philotheos of 899, which is essentially a seating plan for some two hundred people in hierarchical order for court feasts; a list of episcopal precedence in a seventh-century treatise attributed to Epiphanius of Cyprus; and a list of fees payable to officials and churches.⁷

Discussion of these various sections of the *De Ceremoniis* and their characteristics is providing a number of new insights into how Byzantine court ceremonial was organized and how that organizational information was preserved. In particular, Ann Moffat has recently convincingly argued that the sources for much of the material in the *De Ceremoniis* were 'self-help manuals' written by such people as the master of ceremonies (the *praipositos*), the *papias*, the demarchs (the heads of the blue and green factions), and sundry churchmen in order to provide guidance for the organization of great court events such as feasts, to which two hundred or more people might be invited at twenty-four hours' notice.⁸

The *De Ceremoniis*, as we have it, is not, therefore, a nicely organized work. Some passages were written especially for the tenth-century 'edition'; others (including some

⁴ C. Mango and I. Ševčenko, 'A New Manuscript of the *De Ceremoniis*', *DOP*, 14 (1960), 247–49; *Three Treatises*, ed. by Haldon, p. 37, n. 8.

⁵ See summary in Moffatt, 'Master of Ceremonies', pp. 380–83.

⁶ Moffatt, 'Master of Ceremonies', pp. 384–87.

⁷ For the treatise of Philotheos and an essential discussion of Byzantine officials and their court titles, see N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles* (Paris, 1972), pp. 65–235. For the treatise of Epiphanius of Cyprus, see J. Darrouzès, *Notitia episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, 1 (Paris, 1981), pp. 3–9 and 203–13 (Text). For the lists of payments, see M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 182–92, esp. pp. 184–85.

⁸ See Moffatt, 'Master of Ceremonies', p. 387.

much older than the tenth-century ceremonies) were included, as Moffat has put it, ‘simply to be accessible in case they might be useful’.⁹ Much of the material was thus kept ‘in the Master of Ceremonies’ ‘bottom drawer’¹⁰. It may well be asked whether the ‘Book’, if such it can be called, was ever much used, or whether, as Moffatt suggests, the imperial ceremonies ‘limped along much as they had before Constantine Porphyrogennetos’s day on the basis of officials’ often scruffy notes and oral tradition’.¹⁰ *De Ceremoniis* scholarship, therefore, is in a state of flux again. The appearance of the English translation and of a forthcoming major discussion of the *De Ceremoniis* in the French periodical *Travaux et Mémoires* will, understandably, focus even more interest upon these texts in the near future.¹¹

If, whilst acknowledging the great importance of this text, we move beyond the *De Ceremoniis*, attention can be drawn to some lesser-known sources for Byzantine ceremonial. Some, in fact, do seem to bear some relation to the *De Ceremoniis* itself, but others are entirely independent of it. What follows is an attempt to draw attention to some of this material and to indicate some possible areas for future research. First, what other material do we have which could be seen as akin to the *De Ceremoniis* or possibly linked to it in some way and which would repay further study? Here we have both texts and material culture to bear in mind. Secondly, in what other types of sources can we see Byzantine court ceremonial being articulated? Lastly, how does a consideration of this material influence existing assessments of the practice and significance of Byzantine ceremonial in the tenth century?¹²

Let us begin with material with echoes in the *De Ceremoniis*. Two interesting avenues of enquiry immediately present themselves. The *euchologia* of the Church of Constantinople, the prayers suitable for a number of given ceremonial occasions, including imperial coronations and the promotions of imperial officials, were noted down before the eighth century and much of the language in them finds a clear echo in the ceremonial acclamations of the demes as reported in the *De Ceremoniis*.¹³ For example, both texts

⁹ Moffatt, ‘Master of Ceremonies’, p. 388.

¹⁰ Moffatt, ‘Master of Ceremonies’, p. 388.

¹¹ I am grateful to John Haldon for this information.

¹² See the important studies of Michael McCormick and Averil Cameron: M. McCormick, ‘Analysing Imperial Ceremonies’, *JÖB*, 35 (1985), 1–20, and Averil Cameron, ‘The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*’, in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. by D. Cannadine and S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 106–36.

¹³ For texts, see *Euchologion sive rituale Graecorum*, ed. by G. Goar, 2nd edn (Venice, 1730; repr., Graz, 1960). For commentary, see the series of studies by M. Arranz SJ, under the general heading of ‘Les sacrements de l’institution de l’ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain’, esp. III. 1: ‘Couronnement royal et autres promotions de cour’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 56 (1990), 83–133. *Euchologia* are ‘sacraments of institution’, ‘dans le sens que par eux on confère la grâce divine pour faire du chrétien une personne “instituée (constituée, établie, responsable, chargée) pour une fonction de pouvoir, de direction ecclésiastique, de responsabilité de famille etc”’: Arranz, ‘Couronnement royal’, p. 84.

contain material concerning the proper ceremonial for the coronation of an emperor.¹⁴ Prayers for use at such an occasion are contained in various manuscripts of the Constantinopolitan *Euchologion*. The first prayer requests that God shall

Dress him in heavenly power!
 Place on his head a crown of precious stones!
 [. . .]
 Seat him upon the throne of justice!
 Surround him with the armour of the Holy Spirit!
 Give him strength to his arm!
 Submit to him the barbarian nations!¹⁵

The *De Ceremoniis*, however, records the acclamations of the demes, responding anti-phonally to the Chanters of Hagia Sophia:

Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth!
 Peace to all Christians!
 For God has taken pity on his people.
 The great day of the Lord has come!
 See here the day of the salvation of the Romans!
 [. . .]
 Glory to God who has thus glorified you! [etc.]¹⁶

There are obvious similarities in the language and subject matter of these two sets of texts, but what might be the connections between them? It has been persuasively argued that they are, in fact, complementary. The *De Ceremoniis* describes how the ceremonial is to be conducted and notes some of the contributions of the laity (acclamations of the demes, for example); the *Euchologion* gives the texts of the appropriate prayers for the clergy who played such an extensive part in imperial ceremony.¹⁷ The collection of

¹⁴ See P. Yannopoulos, ‘Le couronnement de l’empereur à Byzance’, in *Le souverain à Byzance et en occident du VIIIe au Xe siècle*, ed. by A. Dierkens and J.-M. Sansterre, *Byzantion*, 61.1 (1991), 71–92. For the ceremonial role of the factions by the tenth century, see A. Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Constantinople* (Oxford, 1976), though he issues a timely warning that ‘the *Book of Ceremonies* is no record of what the factions actually did. It is a collection of protocols they were *supposed* to perform on a limited number of special occasions, protocols that were periodically revised and updated so as to serve as accurate models’ (p. 307).

¹⁵ Arrantz, ‘Couronnement royal’, pp. 92–93 (Greek text and French translation; English translation is my own).

¹⁶ *De Ceremoniis*, c. 47, ed. by Vogt, II, 3–4 (my trans.).

¹⁷ Yannopoulos, ‘Couronnement’, p. 76, n. 19. There are some aspects of the two texts which do not fit ideally together; Yannopoulos ascribes this to the earlier (seventh-century) origins of

euchologia, therefore, may well provide an example of a practical manual containing matters appertaining to imperial ceremony written up from a *clerical* point of view—a perspective which is singularly lacking in the surviving texts of the *De Ceremoniis*. If so, then the *euchologia* might well have been kept in the ‘bottom drawer’ of the patriarchal Master of Ceremonies. One of the great achievements of Byzantine ceremonial was thus the successful combination of these separate elements into one impressive whole.¹⁸

Another avenue which is well worth pursuing is the detailed exploration of the material culture associated with the Byzantine court, described in some detail in the *De Ceremoniis*.¹⁹ Oleg Grabar has described a shared elite culture of the medieval Mediterranean world predicated on the exchange of luxury objects, some of them adorned with, as he cogently puts it, ‘meaningless inscriptions and iconographically senseless classical figures’.²⁰ These, nonetheless, were what the Byzantine and Muslim court elite clearly wanted in terms of high-status objects. Why? Indeed, much more work needs to be done on the identification and significance of these objects and the clothes, architecture, and, indeed, the colours of the *De Ceremoniis* and other texts concerning Byzantine court ceremonial.²¹ We also, as Anthony Cutler has recently demonstrated in his discussion of tenth-century ivories, need to reassess how some objects were used.²² What, in fact, was, for want of a better phrase, the prevailing Byzantine court aesthetic? Was it the case that the courtiers of the tenth century had an overwhelming predilection for (as Grabar put it) ‘the large, expensive, heavy, shiny and gem-encrusted’, and if so, why?²³

the *Euchologion*, which, he feels, was well known to the compiler(s) of the *De Ceremoniis*. The study needs to be widened to include a comparison of material relating to other ceremonies than the coronation.

¹⁸ Much like the separate forces under the command of the Earl Marshal and the Dean of Westminster Abbey at an English coronation, secular and clerical groups may each have had their own instructional manuals and their own experience of organizing ritual, but were able to mesh them together when need arose.

¹⁹ See Lyn Rodley, ‘The Byzantine Court and Byzantine Art’, in the present volume.

²⁰ O. Grabar, ‘The Shared Culture of Objects’, in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. by H. Maguire (Washington, DC, 1997), pp. 115–29.

²¹ Rodley, ‘Byzantine Court’, below. The *De Ceremoniis*, ed. by Reiske, I, 570–75, contains an inventory of an immense collection of objects.

²² A. Cutler, *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory and Society in Byzantium, 9th–11th Centuries* (Princeton, 1994), esp. pp. 23–25 where he discusses the rubbed portions of the heads of the three figures on an ivory plaque (Christ between Emperor Romanos II and his empress, Eudocia) and suggests that these are signs that it was frequently handled (and perhaps carried in procession) rather than being placed on static display.

²³ Grabar, ‘Shared Culture’, p. 126. See also E. Voordeckers, ‘Imperial Art in Byzantium from Basil I to Basil II (867–1025)’, in *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn*

What, indeed, did the Byzantine court look and sound like? Some discussions dealing with court costume do, of course, exist as do introductions to the vocal and instrumental music which usually accompanied large-scale court ceremonial.²⁴ For much of the stunning effect of Byzantine ceremonial was gained by an extraordinarily varied use of colour and sound, precisely deployed in a variety of spatial contexts. Sometimes a great crowd was gathered to produce ‘standing room only’ in the audience chambers and dining suites; sometimes there were seemingly acres of space for overawed and tongue-tied barbarian emissaries to be marched across. Byzantine ceremonial took place in all kinds of spaces from the intimacy of the sanctuaries of churches, into which the emperor was the only layman privileged to enter, to the vast formal reception rooms of the Great Palace. There is no doubt that much more work needs to be done on the architectural setting against which court ceremonial was played out.²⁵

There are, therefore, many problems which arise from further ‘readings’ of the *De Ceremoniis* and texts that should probably be associated with it. But there are also many interesting areas to explore when we turn to other written sources—and indeed images—concerned with Byzantine ceremonial. Sport, for example. The Hippodrome, where, the chronicles tell us disapprovingly, the ninth-century Emperor Michael III liked to race in person, but where other more staid monarchs viewed the chariot races from the imperial box, served to link the Great Palace with its urban surroundings in both an architectural and political way.²⁶ It was the setting par excellence where the largest-scale ceremonial could be played out and the scene, even as late as the tenth century, of imperial triumphs of a traditional Roman variety. It was also one of the

of the First Millennium, ed. by A. Davids (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 231–43, who argues that much of the art of the so-called ‘Macedonian Renaissance’, such as silks, votive crowns, and illuminated *menologia*, was imperial and thus played an important part in court culture.

²⁴ Rodley, ‘Byzantine Court’, below. For music, see E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1961), pt. IV, pp. 98–122.

²⁵ See the interesting discussion of numbers in A. P. Kazhdan and M. McCormick, ‘The Social World of the Byzantine Court’, in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 167–97. They estimate that 2500 invitations were issued to feasts between Christmas and Epiphany, which, taking accounts of ‘repeat invitations’, provided a guest list of some 1600 persons. In his own work on triumphs (M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 194, n. 27), McCormick has estimated that the Triklinos, or Banqueting Hall, could accommodate 228 guests. Yet there was clearly space in the chambers and corridors of the Great Palace for the imperial processions to pass through ranks of courtiers. See, for example, *De Ceremoniis*, ed. by Vogt, I, 8, describing the route through the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia.

²⁶ P. Karlin-Hayter, ‘Imperial Charioteers Seen by the Senate or by the Plebs’, *Byzantion*, 57 (1987), 326–35; J. Herrin, ‘Byzance: le palais et la ville’, in *Le souverain à Byzance*, ed. by Dierkens and Sansterre, *Byzantion*, 61.1 (1991), 213–30, esp. pp. 216 and 225.

relatively few places where the crowd of Constantinople could *share* an entire imperial ceremonial, rather than merely observe parts of it.²⁷

There is no doubt either that hunting should also be treated as a ceremonial pastime.²⁸ Foreign visitors, such as Liutprand of Cremona, were graciously allowed to witness the hunting of wild asses in Nikephoros Phokas's game park, though Liutprand found it all 'highly displeasing' and the wild asses (*onagri*) no different from the domesticated ones he knew of in Italy.²⁹ In a poem written in the second half of the tenth century by John Geometres, hares and roe deer are mentioned in another park, which may have been that known as the Aretai.³⁰ These were clearly game enclosures (like those at Aachen) where genteel sport could be assured as part of the imperial recreation.³¹

But in Liutprand's earlier work, the *Antapodosis*, we also hear how the young Romanos Lekapenos (then a naval officer) impressed Emperor Leo VI by his killing of a lion in coastal marshlands when on the hunt for Muslims and how, by this means, he 'came to the notice of the emperor'.³² This took place, as Evelyne Patlagean has reminded us in 'la libre nature boisée', which not only provided different kinds of game, but a different kind of hunt.³³ The idea of the game park reserved for the sovereign and his immediate entourage was a ceremony essentially Persian in origin; the hunt in the great outdoors, however, gave great opportunities for deeds of valour similar to those achieved in war.

The organization of the imperial hunt was confided to the *protostrator*, a title which first appears under Emperor Constantine V in the eighth century and was often subsequently used to mark out a favourite.³⁴ At the end of the ninth century, Michael III granted it to the young Basil, the handsome *parvenu* from Macedonia, who later himself became emperor.³⁵ The hunt, then, and especially the sport in the game park, was thus an opportunity for the male—and eunuch—court to remove itself from its immediate physical surroundings in the Palace and to test out manly virtues in a controlled setting. It may indeed be the case that such ideas spread westwards, as Patlagean has suggested. For whence comes the strange passage in the Carolingian *Capitulare de Villis* (c. 36) in

²⁷ See McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, esp. cc. 2 and 4.

²⁸ See James Campbell, 'Anglo-Saxon Courts', above, and, in the Byzantine context, E. Patlagean, 'De la chasse et du souverain', *DOP*, 46 (1992), 257–63.

²⁹ Liutprand, *Relatio*, ed. by Chiesa, cc. 37–38, p. 203.

³⁰ H. Maguire, 'A Description of the Aretai Palace and Its Garden', *Journal of Garden History*, 10 (1990), 209–13. See also A. Littlewood, 'Gardens of the Palaces', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 13–38.

³¹ See Campbell, 'Anglo-Saxon Courts', above.

³² Liutprand, *Antapodosis*, ed. by Chiesa, III. 25, pp. 477–79.

³³ Patlagean, 'De la chasse', p. 260.

³⁴ See Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance byzantines*, pp. 337–38, for the *protostrator*.

³⁵ Patlagean, 'De la chasse', p. 260.

which the *iudices* are ordered to make ready in every *villa* all sorts of birds of prey, in case the monarch should arrive? Peacocks, pheasants, and other rather unlikely inhabitants of rainy, windswept eastern France are specified. Could not the source for this passage be a lost Byzantine instructional manual directed at the *protostrator*?³⁶

Prowess at hunting was an imperial virtue often celebrated by imperially orientated rhetoric, and rhetoric was itself a common spectator sport at Byzantine courts. Fluent oratory was a skill much prized amongst the elite and the delivery of formal speeches provided occasions where rhetorical skills could be demonstrated and their practitioners admired and rewarded. They played an important part in Byzantine court ceremonial and rhetoric itself was an often-used tool in the bolstering of imperial ideology.³⁷ Indeed, a special poetic metre, the *basilikos logos*, was reserved for imperial encomium or panegyric.³⁸ At the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries, amongst his many formal orations, we find the learned Arethas delivering an encomium on Emperor Leo VI (dated to 901–02) in the presence of its subject and his courtiers.³⁹ Was he, perhaps, court orator? It was certainly established custom by this time for a formal speech to be delivered in the presence of the emperor and court on the Feast of the Epiphany, the ceremony for which is described in detail in the *De Ceremoniis*.⁴⁰

The importance of these addresses and other types of formal rhetoric, such as the sermon delivered by Patriarch Photios when he consecrated the Church of the Theotokos of the Pharos in the Great Palace complex in 864–65, is that they were often delivered within a year or two of the events they describe and thus help to indicate what were immediate court concerns. These were ‘happening’ events, to which court ceremonial had to be adapted.⁴¹ Orations on the births, marriages, and deaths of emperors and their

³⁶ Patlagean, ‘De la chasse’, p. 261.

³⁷ For a short introduction, see H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975). The Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held in Oxford in 2001 was devoted to the subject of rhetoric in Byzantium.

³⁸ G. T. Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality’, in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 131–40 (pp. 133–35). Dennis has compared Byzantine court addresses with nomination speeches at American political conventions, or those conferring honorary degrees in institutions of higher education. We should, however, never forget how brittle and fragile this might be in practice. One late Byzantine emperor, Michael VIII, annoyed and perhaps bored rigid by a long-winded effort in his praise by George Akropolites, simply got up and left; see Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric’, p. 134.

³⁹ Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric’, p. 135.

⁴⁰ *De Ceremoniis*, ed. by Vogt, I, 130–36, though, interestingly, no mention is made of speeches.

⁴¹ Dennis, ‘Imperial Panegyric’, p. 137. For Photios’s homily on the consecration of the Theotokos of the Pharos (not the so-called ‘*Nea Ekklesia*’, as was long thought), see *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. by C. Mango, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 3

relatives were also important grist to this particular mill. But three particular examples of orations which were given in a courtly context can illustrate an often highly contemporary relevance for rhetoric. Their delivery was surrounded by formal, ceremonial activity. One concerned the inauguration of a building, the second a treaty, the third a marriage. All were events which would have been incomplete without their accompanying rhetorical flourishes.

At the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries, the rhetorician Leo Choirosphaktes composed an *ekphrasis*, or formal description, of a bath complex built by Leo the Wise (Leo VI, 886–912), using his eulogy of the various architectural features of the building as a device to praise the Emperor himself.⁴² The bath is proof of the creative genius of the Emperor; many of its features, such as the flowing waters and skilfully opening doors themselves sing his praises; the iconography of the decoration of the main chambers is interpreted by Choirosphaktes as a portrayal of the Emperor's cosmic kingship and virtues.⁴³ The *ekphrasis* was written in anacreontic metre, often used for songs, so it might well have been sung during an opening ceremony for the building attended by the Emperor and his court. That this metre was also used in secular ceremonies, such as those for the Brumalia recorded in the *De Ceremoniis*, serves to remind us that the emperor was celebrated not only as God's representative on earth in a quasi-religious sense, but also in a way which emphasized his secular position as the head of the *politeia*, the *civil* hierarchy of the state.⁴⁴ The inauguration of a building could thus see the creation of a ceremonial moment, tailor-made to fit the precise circumstances.

Such creations could also be inspired by a particularly auspicious political event, such as the Peace with Bulgaria commemorated in a formal speech delivered in the Great Palace in October 927, almost certainly written by Theodore Daphnopates.⁴⁵ Again, imperial triumph was the main object of commemoration:

(God) has granted our times the zealot Jonah [a reference to Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, who had been a sailor] and has maintained him greatest amongst the greatest and

(Cambridge, MA, 1958), *Homily X*, pp. 184–90 and notes pp. 177–83. See also R. J. H. Jenkins and C. A. Mango, 'The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius', *DOP*, 9/10 (1956), 125–40.

⁴² P. Magdalino, 'In Search of the Byzantine Courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 141–65; for the *ekphrasis*, pp. 147–49. For fuller discussion and trans. see P. Magdalino, 'The Bath of Leo the Wise and the Macedonian Renaissance Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology', *DOP*, 42 (1988), 97–118 (English trans. of the *ekphrasis*, pp. 116–18).

⁴³ Magdalino, 'In Search of the Byzantine Courtier', pp. 148–49.

⁴⁴ Magdalino, 'Bath of Leo the Wise [...] Revisited', pp. 98–99. For the anacreontic metre, see *ODB*, 1, 83.

⁴⁵ I. Dujčev, 'On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians', *DOP*, 32 (1978), 217–95; text and English trans., pp. 255–95.

strengthened his arm with His own. [. . .] he raised him up to be, in one and the same person, our Emperor and bulwark and champion and peace-maker.⁴⁶

As with the inauguration speech for Leo VI's bath, the moment at which the speech was delivered is not precisely known, but the circumstances that led to its composition as part of a specifically created ceremonial are. But there are many unknowns surrounding the circumstances in which this ceremonial rhetoric was performed. The point of such speeches is obvious, but what were the physical surroundings in which they were delivered? Inside or outside? Probably inside for reasons of audibility and, maybe, climate. The audience standing or sitting? At what time of day? What happened before and after the speeches were delivered? All these questions need further study; we should perhaps look to descriptions of similar goings-on at the Carolingian court for some guidance.⁴⁷

It is, however, sometimes possible to link rhetorical celebrations of important court events with more precise evidence from other sources such as chronicles. An integral part of the Peace with Bulgaria celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates, was the marriage, on 8 October 927, of a Byzantine princess, Maria Lekapena, the granddaughter of the ruling emperor, to the young Tsar Peter of Bulgaria.⁴⁸ This was the occasion for more court ceremonial and public spectacle. The Emperor greeted the Bulgarian ruler at the Palace of Blachernai and then 'with all the Senate' they went to church accompanied by the patriarch.⁴⁹ Three days later, the Emperor gave a feast on a wharf on the Golden Horn and, as the Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete reported, had it decorated with silken cloths and had the imperial *dromon* or warship moored to the wharf.⁵⁰ Much is made of all this by the Logothete, and just as Theodore Daphnopates used his speech to glorify Romanos, so the rhetorical passages in the Chronicle make political points about the Lekapenos dynasty and incidentally give us an interesting glimpse into the way ceremonial might be manipulated. For, at the open-air banquet, 'the Byzantines

⁴⁶ Dujcev, 'Treaty of 927', c. 7, pp. 265–67.

⁴⁷ The spatial dynamics of the Byzantine court is a subject to which I hope to return. But it is more than likely, that, as in the Carolingian court, banquets provided an occasion upon which orations could be heard. For a short discussion on the physical settings of Byzantine 'rhetorical theatre' in the twelfth century, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 352–53.

⁴⁸ J. Shepard, 'A Marriage Too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria', in *Empress Theophano*, ed. by Davids, pp. 121–49.

⁴⁹ Shepard, 'Marriage Too Far', p. 129.

⁵⁰ See Shepard, 'Marriage Too Far', p. 129. The importance of boats to regal ceremonial is also a topic well worth pursuing. Progresses such as those of Athelstan down the Dee, the Doge of Venice along the Grand Canal, and Elizabeth I down the Thames not only allowed large numbers to see the ruler without presenting any of the difficulties and dangers present at a procession on dry land, but also, with their implicit imagery of master and rowing slaves, emphasized his or her omnipotence over water as well as land.

vehemently insisted that the bride's father, Christopher [Romanos Lekapenos's son] should be acclaimed first and *then* Constantine [Constantine Porphyrogennetos who had been relegated to junior emperor status after Romanos's coup in 920].⁵¹ The wording of an acclamation might have been long established, but the order in which individuals were acclaimed could still spring some surprises (albeit contrived ones) on the day. The events of 927 were thus commemorated in a variety of courtly ways as befitting celebrations of state importance, and they clearly took place both inside and outside. The physical surroundings in which speeches were delivered and formal celebrations organized reveal a mobile court which could remove itself to the required location, whether it be church, bath, or wharf, and transform its surroundings with suitable props of flowers, expensive cloths, or ornaments. This was achieved by a swarm of court officials skilled in the art of instant improvisation.⁵²

Similar skills can also be seen on view when the emperor went on campaign. Here again there is watered-down ceremonial, but ceremonial nonetheless, described in the so-called *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions* which used, until recently, to be considered part of the scrappier section of the *De Ceremoniis*.⁵³ In the longest of the three treatises (*Treatise C*), there are descriptions of the relocation of the imperial court to the countryside, by means of the transportation of objects which made court ceremonial possible, and on an only slightly reduced scale.⁵⁴ There are folding tables and chairs, utensils, napkins, seating rugs, cushions, a portable Turkish Bath with red leather cistern and pitchers, grates and bricks for the heating apparatus of the bath, a portable chapel with sacred furniture, imperial clothing and regalia (all in chic purple leather trunks), wine-coolers, antidotes for poison, perfumes, unguents, salves, ointments, herbs, the imperial commode bound with gold and its chamber pot, other 'similar seats bound in silver for "distinguished refugees"',⁵⁵ imperial chalices for guests invited to dine with the emperor, solid gold plates, gold vases, two solid gold jugs, three hundred two-ounce candles, three hundred pounds of torch fat, and so on.⁵⁶ The details of the meat allowance for feasts in Syria are included, as are details of the presents to be given to provincial governors (*strategoi*) when they come to meet the imperial party at an *aplekton* (an army rendezvous point where supplies and fodder were available).⁵⁷

⁵¹ Shepard, 'Marriage Too Far', p. 132.

⁵² See below n. 59.

⁵³ See n. 3, above, for the treatises. J. Haldon, 'The Organisation and Support of an Expeditionary Force: Manpower and Logistics in the Middle Byzantine Period', in *Byzantium at War (9th–12th c.)*, ed. by K. Tsiknakis, Institute for Byzantine Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation, International Symposium, 4 (Athens, 1997), pp. 111–51.

⁵⁴ *Text C*, in *Three Treatises*, ed. by Haldon, pp. 95–151 (Text); pp. 177–293 (Notes).

⁵⁵ *Text C*, p. 108.

⁵⁶ *Text C*, pp. 104–08.

⁵⁷ *Text C*, pp. 126–28.

Court ceremonial, therefore, could be, and was, transferred in miniature, but a pretty substantial miniature, to the countryside. It did not have to take place in Constantinople.

Treatise C is also another useful collaborative source for the processions described in the *De Ceremoniis* proper. Here, the emphasis is not so much on the Feast Day processions described in the latter document, as on the triumphs to be awarded to victorious emperors returning to the capital. The triumph of Emperor Basil I on his return from defeating Paulician heretics in 879 is described in some detail.⁵⁸ As he paraded through Constantinople from Hiereia to the Hebdomon, the citizens met him with crowns made of roses and other flowers. With the members of the Senate, he first prayed in the Church of St John the Baptist at the Hebdomon, then made his way to the Church of the Virgin of Abraamites. The Eparch (the chief urban official) had prepared the city:

garlanding the route from the Golden Gate as far as the Chalke with laurel and rosemary and myrtle and roses and other flowers also with a variety of *skaramangia* (silk cloths) and silk hangings and candelabra. He similarly strewed the ground, which was completely covered in flowers. *Scholion*: Note that the City was decked out like a bridal canopy.⁵⁹

There was a display of booty outside the Golden Gate and

when it had been divided up, it was paraded triumphally along the Mese, from the Golden Gate to the Chalke [Gate] of the Palace [. . .]. The demes received the emperor at the Golden Gate, wearing deme tunics and segmented diadems on their heads and with other garlands made from roses and flowers around their necks, carrying kerchiefs in their hands.⁶⁰

Their acclamations emphasized victory. The route included stops at predetermined points where these were proclaimed, a church service in the Church of the Theotokos in the Forum Tauri, multiple changes of imperial costume along the length of the Mese to the Milion and again at Hagia Sophia, Divine Liturgy in the Great Church, and then a return to the Palace for a great feast held in the Triklinion.⁶¹

In the illustrated version of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes, there can be found representations of two other triumphal processions of the period. They portray the return of Nikephoros Phokas from campaign in the East in 963, in a depiction which clearly emphasizes the importance of ceremonial music (see fig. 36), and that of John Tzimiskes (969–76) from a successful campaign against the Bulgarians in which not only booty was paraded, but something much more significant: a large icon of the Virgin

⁵⁸ *Text C*, pp. 140–47. See McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, pp. 155–57.

⁵⁹ *Text C*, p. 140. For the duty of the Eparch to collect (or commandeer) precious objects and cloths to decorate the City on ceremonial occasions, see *Text C*, notes p. 274.

⁶⁰ *Text C*, p. 142.

⁶¹ *Text C*, p. 144.



Fig. 36. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2, fol. 145^r. *Madrid Skylizes: Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas*

(see fig. 37).⁶² Icons and relics thus played an important part in outdoor ceremonial, though after their deposition in a church they were often little heard of again.⁶³ They played their part in another type of 'instant ceremonial' specially composed for the occasion.

It has been estimated that Constantinople once contained some 3600 relics of 476 saints, and the ninth and tenth centuries certainly saw an increase in the translation of relics to the capital as a consequence of the growing successes of the Byzantine armies on the eastern frontiers. Of particular importance were the translations to Constantinople of the *Mandylion* in 944, the Arm of John the Baptist in 945, the *Keramidion* (or 'Holy Brick') in 966, and the Sandal of Christ in 975, since all of these relics had an intimate connection with the Saviour. Relic collection was an imperially inspired activity and the arrival in the City of these precious trophies provided the opportunity for a ceremonial and highly visible moment of contact between the supernatural and imperial power. The parading of relics through the streets of Constantinople transmitted a number of highly charged messages: about the emperor as the bringer of victory, about his concern for the preservation and prosperity of the empire, and, above all, about his favour with the saints and God-guarded rulership. For, as was well accepted by the Byzantines as much as by their western contemporaries, saints did not allow their relics to be translated unless they thoroughly approved of the new destination. As Ioli Kalavrezou has pointed out, relics 'functioned as instruments of power, investiture and leadership'.⁶⁴ It is clear from the accounts of these relic *translationes* that the emperor and court took a major

⁶² One should, of course, be extremely wary about using the miniatures of the so-called 'illustrated Skylitzes' (a manuscript of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes, for the text of which see *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, ed. by I. Thurn, CFHB, series Berolinensis, 5 (Berlin, 1973)), probably produced in Sicily in the mid-twelfth century, to conjure up a vision of Constantinopolitan processions in the tenth century, but since, firstly, the illustrations closely parallel matters dealt with in the accompanying text (written in Byzantium in the late eleventh century) and, secondly, may have derived from a Constantinopolitan original, one may perhaps proceed with caution and use this unique source for Byzantine ceremonial in an 'impressionistic way'. For the illustrated 'Madrid Skylitzes' (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2), see L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 259. The miniatures are published in A. Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid* (Venice, 1979), see particularly fol. 145^r b (Grabar and Manoussacas, *Manuscrit de Skylitzès*, plate XXX; text: Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. by Thurn, p. 258) for Nikephoros Phokas and fol. 172^v a (Grabar and Manoussacas, *Manuscrit de Skylitzès*, plate XXXIV; text: Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. by Thurn, p. 310) for John Tzimiskes. I am grateful to the Research Support Fund of the Faculty of Arts, University of Manchester, for a grant to finance the illustrations in this paper.

⁶³ A. Weyl Carr, 'Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 81–99 (see esp. pp. 85–89).

⁶⁴ I. Kalavrezou, 'Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 53–79 (p. 55).

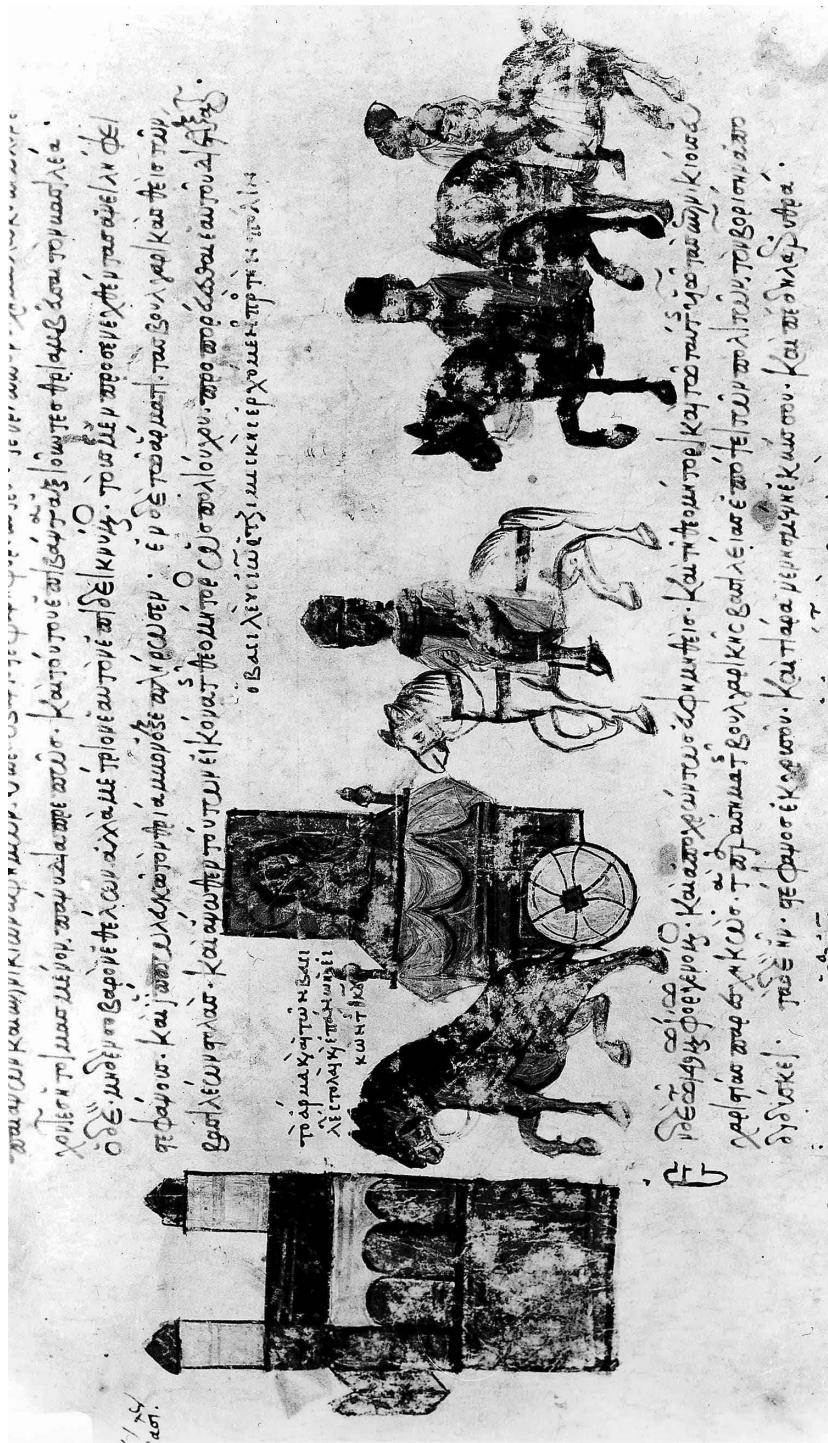


Fig. 37. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2, fol. 172a. Madrid Skylites: Emperor John I Tzimiskes (969–76) leads a procession to celebrate victory over the Bulgarians headed by an icon of the Virgin.
 Photo by kind permission of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

part in the ceremonial associated with their welcome. They were extraordinary ceremonials, of course, but if we number them, as we should, with the secular triumphs which are recorded in the *De Ceremoniis*, such *ad hoc* triumphal ‘arrivals’ were by no means infrequent in the tenth century. The most famous is undoubtedly the translation of the *Mandylion* (the image of Christ on a cloth) from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 whence it had been extorted from both Muslim and Christian inhabitants as part of a peace settlement.⁶⁵ On 15 August 944, itself the day of the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin, the image reached Constantinople where it was lodged in the Church of the Theotokos at Blachernai. The following day, Patriarch Theophylact Lekapenos and the three co-emperors, Constantine Porphyrogennetos and Constantine and Stephen Lekapenos (son-in-law and sons of the senior reigning emperor, Romanos Lekapenos) paraded it around the land and sea walls, then in through the Golden Gate and along the Mese to Hagia Sophia. Some of this ceremonial is portrayed in the Madrid Skylitzes, where we see the *parakoimomenos* Theophanes presenting the relic on its arrival in Constantinople to Romanos (fig. 38). It was eventually placed in the Church of the Theotokos at the Pharos.⁶⁶ This procession through the city was accompanied by at least one miracle: a paralytic was healed. Interestingly, according to another contemporary account of the translation, of the imperial party only Constantine Porphyrogennetos could see the image clearly when it was displayed to them. His wicked brothers-in-law, the sons of the man who had usurped his throne, could not.⁶⁷

A statement on an important matter of imperial legitimacy was thus woven into an account of this particular ceremonial and the same is true in the source known as the *Translation of the Holy Brick of Hierapolis*.⁶⁸ Hierapolis in Syria was conquered by the Byzantines in 966 and its most famous relic was linked to that of Edessa, for the brick was supposed to be that upon which the messenger, Ananias, had rested the *Mandylion* as he travelled from Jerusalem via Hierapolis to his patron, King Abgar of Edessa, and

⁶⁵ See the *Narratio de imagine Edessena* (attributed to Constantine Porphyrogennetos) in *PG*, 113, cols 421–54, and, for discussion, S. Runciman, ‘Some Remarks on the Image of Edessa’, *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 3 (1931), 238–52; A. Cameron, ‘The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story’, in *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Sevčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. by C. A. Mango and O. Pritsak, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 7 (Cambridge, MA, 1984), pp. 80–94; and K. Weitzmann, ‘The *mandylion* and Constantine Porphyrogenitus’, *Cahiers archéologiques*, 11 (1960), 163–84.

⁶⁶ Fol. 131^r a: Grabar and Manoussacas, *Manuscrit de Skylitzès*, fig. 158. For the Church of the Theotokos at the Pharos (the lighthouse within the complex of the Great Palace), see Kalavrezou, ‘Helping Hands’, pp. 54–56.

⁶⁷ See Runciman, ‘Some Remarks’, pp. 249–50.

⁶⁸ F. Halkin, ed., ‘Translation par Nicéphore Phocas de la brique miraculeuse d’Hiérapolis (BHG 3 801n)’, in *Inédits byzantins d’Ochrida, Candie et Moscou*, *Subsidia hagiographica*, 38 (Brussels, 1963), pp. 253–60.



Fig. 38. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2, fol. 131^r a. *Madrid Skylitzes: The mandylion of Edessa is presented to Romanos I Lekapenos (944).* Photo by kind permission of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

upon which Christ's features had subsequently been imprinted.⁶⁹ The account of the translation of the Holy Brick begins with a eulogy of Nikephoros Phokas, the ruling emperor, who was, of course, considered to be an illegitimate usurper by supporters of the Macedonian dynasty.⁷⁰ Again, though, emperor and relic are clearly linked; the text comments that 'the treasure [the relic] was given to us by our lord Nikephoros'.⁷¹ The processional route was similar to that taken by the *Mandylion*. The relic was kept overnight at the Church of the Theotokos at Blachernai, brought in on 24 January 967 and paraded to the Great Church of Hagia Sophia. It was later moved to the Church of All Saints (and possibly later to the Great Palace).⁷²

Though the vast majority of processions took place by day, the account by the historian John Skylitzes of the arrival of the Arm of St John the Baptist from Antioch in 956, gives a vivid description of a nocturnal, sea-borne procession.

⁶⁹ See 'Brique miraculeuse', p. 254.

⁷⁰ 'Brique miraculeuse', p. 255–56. For the contrasting traditions on Nikephoros Phokas, see R. Morris, 'The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 12 (1988), 83–115.

⁷¹ 'Brique miraculeuse', p. 259, c. 3, lines 1–2 (my emphasis).

⁷² 'Brique miraculeuse', p. 260.

In this period, the holy arm of Prodromos arrived also in the capital, having been stolen from Antioch by a certain deacon, Job by name. When it reached Chalcedon, the emperor sent out the royal barge and, while the Senate at its most splendid and the Patriarch Polyeuktos came out to greet it with candles, torches and incense, he carried it into the Palace.⁷³

The arrival of this relic was also celebrated by rhetoric, for, on the first anniversary of its translation, Theodore Daphnopoulos's commemorative speech refreshed the reputation of the emperor with further ceremonial. John the Baptist's intercession is requested for Constantine Porphyrogennetos 'to whom you have granted rule *as a paternal inheritance* [a significant remark as Constantine was born out of wedlock and subsequently legitimized by his father, Leo VI, in 906] and whom you do not fail to make ever more victorious. We beseech you to bless him with a long passage of years'.⁷⁴

Bearing these examples in mind, it is quite clear that further research is needed not only to extract details of ceremonial from as wide a variety of texts as possible, but also to ask some searching questions of the texts themselves. The very recording of a ceremonial often indicates not only that there was something special about it, but that the author of the record had some important points that he wanted to make about its instigator. The record of the ceremonial could be just as pregnant with political messages as the celebration itself.⁷⁵ There is, in fact, a considerable variety of material which brings Byzantine ceremonial out of the imperial wardrobe and the confines of the Great Palace and onto the streets of Constantinople, the hinterland of the capital, and even, indeed, into the provinces.⁷⁶ The court ceremonial might be shorter or scaled down; it might be centred on a relic rather than the emperor himself; it might be performed in a military camp rather than in the Great Palace; but its very adaptability testifies to the ingenuity of a body of court officials who felt it was important to get the basics right and to a court society that expressed its values through the invention and performance of ceremonial.

⁷³ Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. by Thurn, p. 245, trans. in Kalavrezou, 'Helping Hands', p. 67.

⁷⁴ Kalavrezou, 'Helping Hands', pp. 76–78 (my emphasis).

⁷⁵ McCormick 'Analysing Imperial Ceremonies', p. 8, makes the point that Byzantine narratives of ceremonies often miss out the details, assuming that their readers would know them. It is, therefore, all the more significant when details and comments are included, as in the cases discussed above.

⁷⁶ Thus putting into question the view expressed by McCormick and Cameron that the tenth century sees 'a retreat of government from the public scene' into the confines of the Palace; see Cameron, 'Construction of Court Ritual', p. 129. The imperial *adventus* into provincial cities is little documented in this period; this is not to say, however, that it did not take place. McCormick, 'Analysing Imperial Ceremonies', pp. 14–15, indeed reminds us that celebratory processions of all sorts (apart from the imperial ones) took place in the streets of Constantinople.

The Byzantines employed ceremonial because through ceremonial important ideas about the nature of imperial rule could be expressed and because participation in ceremonies helped to cement the relationship between the emperor and his court, no mere ornamental body, but the ruling elite of the empire.⁷⁷ By following long-established ceremonial, as epitomized by the *De Ceremoniis*, Byzantine emperors and their courts could preserve that *taxis* which, it was declared, mirrored on earth the divine order of creation and the calm rituals of Heaven. It could paper over the cracks in a political society which, in the tenth century, was having to cope with usurpation and illegitimate birth and marriage as well as very serious military threat.⁷⁸ But by inventing new ceremonial, such as formal speeches, sermons, triumphs, and relic processions, Byzantine court officials and the clergy of Constantinople who worked with them created a series of public spectacles of a much more specific relevance, the importance of which has been overshadowed by the sheer volume of material contained in the *De Ceremoniis*. The role of ceremonial in tenth-century Byzantium was not merely to express the unchanging majesty and grandeur of empire, but also to supply precise and contemporary political messages.

⁷⁷ Cameron, 'Construction of Court Ritual', pp. 124 and 129.

⁷⁸ Cameron, 'Construction of Court Ritual', p. 136, sees the construction of the *De Ceremoniis* as itself reflecting a need 'to restore a sense of order in society'.

The Byzantine Court and Byzantine Art

LYN RODLEY

The chief evidence for all aspects of the life of the medieval Byzantine court comes, as one might expect, from documentary sources of a variety of types.¹ The greatest detail of the ceremonial of the court comes from texts which record the procedures to be followed on particular occasions, and could therefore function as reference works, or instruction manuals for those participating. The unique *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, produced for the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, appears to be a compilation of material of this sort, setting out the protocol for a wide range of formal events: processions (often from the imperial palace to churches in the city), coronations, triumphs, the appointment or promotion of office-holders, and the reception of ambassadors.² The *Kleitorologion* of Philotheos, appended to *De Ceremoniis* but of independent origin (in 899), gives instructions for seating dignitaries at formal banquets and includes details of the dress and insignia appropriate to the various ranks: a *protospatharios* should wear a jewelled gold collar, for example, and a *magistros* would have a gold-embroidered white tunic, with a white mantle and belt.³ Byzantine historians and other writers also make occasional references to court ceremonial and its accoutrements, in a less structured or focussed manner. For instance, Anna Komnena, in the twelfth century, explains the creation by Alexios I of a new title for his brother and describes the type of crown he should wear.⁴ Not least, there are the

¹ Rosemary Morris, 'Beyond the *De Ceremoniis*', above. See also M. McCormick, 'Analysing Imperial Ceremonies', *JÖB*, 35 (1985), 1–20, and *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. by H. Maguire (Washington, DC, 1997).

² See *ODB*, I, 596–97, for a convenient summary of the contents.

³ J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911), p. 22.

⁴ *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. by E. R. A. Sewter (London, 1969), pp. 111–12 (= *Alexiad*, III. iv).

descriptions of ceremonial seen by foreign visitors to the always-cosmopolitan city of Constantinople: Arabs, Russians, Italians and others from the west, all impressed by what they saw in one way or another.⁵

What They Did

My concern here is the extent to which the material culture of the Byzantine Empire may be used to corroborate or extend the information supplied by these documentary sources, but to set the scene, I will first offer brief summaries of accounts by two of the foreign visitors just noted. The first of these is very well known: Liutprand of Cremona's description of his reception by Constantine VII in the autumn of 949, the highlight of a diplomatic visit on behalf of Berengar II of Italy. Liutprand and other foreign visitors were received in the Magnaura (a hall in the imperial palace) where the Emperor gave audience from a huge throne flanked by mechanical golden lions. These were capable of roaring and moving their tails, while nearby stood a gilded bronze tree full of twittering mechanical birds. Liutprand, who had been briefed beforehand both about these marvels and the protocol of the occasion, entered attended by a pair of eunuchs, and prostrated himself on the ground three times before the enthroned Emperor, eventually looking up to see that the throne had risen to ceiling level, and the Emperor had changed his costume. A brief formal greeting was then offered, not by the Emperor himself, but by a secretary (conveniently still at ground level, one supposes). Some time later, in circumstances not described, Liutprand presented the Emperor with the gifts he had brought for him: an assortment of high-quality armour and weaponry, and four young eunuchs.⁶ Three days later, the Emperor invited Liutprand to dine with him in the hall of the nineteen couches (another part of the palace) where the meal, served in gold dishes, was taken in the Roman style, with the diners reclining. The fruit course arrived in gold vessels so heavy that they had to be lifted onto the table by a winch-and-pulley system set in the ceiling. On this occasion, Liutprand was able to converse with the Emperor, and they exchanged opinions about the skills of the acrobats who provided entertainment after the meal.

Equally famous, and in stark contrast, Liutprand's account of a later visit to Constantinople, in 968, when he encountered the emperor Nikephoros Phokas, supplies evidence

⁵ J. Ebersolt, *Constantinople Byzantine et les Voyageurs du Levant* (Paris, 1918), pp. 27–64.

⁶ Liutprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. by F. A. Wright, ed. by J. J. Norwich (London, 1993), pp. 151–56 (= *Antapodosis*, VI). Liutprand's account corresponds in many details to the instructions given in *De Ceremoniis*, ii, 15, for the reception of foreign envoys: ed. by J. J. Reiske, CSHB (Bonn, 1829–30), I, 566.12–570.10. The 'coals to Newcastle' aspect of a gift of eunuchs to a court already full of them is noted by Norwich. Liutprand explains, however, that these four were of a special type, produced at Verdun for export to Spain, so perhaps the gift was a sophisticated one, offering refined examples of a commodity in which the Byzantine court was discerning.

that breaches of ceremonial protocol could be used to offend. Kept waiting at one of the city gates, obliged to enter on foot, held virtually under house arrest in an uncomfortable residence distant from the imperial palace, and attended by a surly servant, Liutprand was pointedly given no sumptuous audience, but instead had a long, disputatious exchange with Nikephoros. This was terminated by the Emperor's obligation to attend a procession from the imperial palace to Hagia Sophia, which Liutprand witnessed from a stand accommodating the singers whose function was to chant formal praises of the Emperor. (Whether this position was itself a slight is not clear; possibly not, otherwise Liutprand would surely have made more of it.) Liutprand's view of Byzantine ceremonial on this occasion is contemptuous: he derides the barefoot mob assembled to line the route, complaining that the formal dress of the nobles was old, shabby, and ill-fitting, and that the Emperor's own unappealing person looked even worse in ceremonial costume. The dispute continued later, following an unpalatable meal which Liutprand was obliged to attend without his entourage and seated fifteen places away from the Emperor.⁷ (Tiresome though this experience evidently was to Liutprand, one may note that he at least managed to have a lengthy and serious conversation with Nikephoros, which many would find more interesting than the exchange of polite trivia with Constantine VII.)

A very different view of a procession is given by the Persian Harun-Ibn-Yahya, writing towards the end of the ninth century, even though he was brought to Constantinople as a captive and so perhaps had as much reason for resentment as Liutprand. This procession covered the same ground, between the palace and Hagia Sophia, but according to Harun, the entire occasion was splendid. The route was lined with mats spread with aromatic leaves and the procession began with groups of men, each ten thousand strong: mature men in red brocade, young ones in white, boys in green, servants in blue, all carrying gilded axes. Next came eunuchs in Persian dress, carrying crosses, followed by Turkish and Persian pages with breastplates, gold lances, and shields. Then there were patricians with gold censers, twelve chief patricians with golden staffs, and more pages bearing a golden chest containing the ceremonial robe the Emperor was to wear at prayer. Finally, the *silentarius*, bidding the crowd to silence for the Emperor, who arrived followed by three grey horses with gold saddles decorated with pearls and jewels.⁸

Detailed analysis of these and other accounts is beyond the scope of this essay, so I will only note the usual qualifications: all descriptions may embody conventional elements (Harun-Ibn-Yahya's groups of ten thousand are surely such)⁹ or reflect the bias

⁷ Liutprand, *Embassy to Constantinople*, trans. by Wright, ed. by Norwich, pp. 177–82 (= *Embassy*, chs 1–11).

⁸ A. Vasiliev, 'Harun-Ibn-Yahya and His Description of Constantinople', *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, 5 (1932), 149–63 (pp. 158–60).

⁹ Adding the numbers Harun gives for the various groups, the procession would have had at least 55,000 participants; the distance between the imperial palace and Hagia Sophia is about a quarter of a mile.

of the observer, as the conflicting views of processions noted above clearly show. But between Liutprand's malice and Harun's hyperbole there doubtless lies a general principle that the Byzantine court manifested itself publicly by spectacular display. Much use was made of processions, many of them covering only the short distance between the imperial palace and Hagia Sophia, others ranging further, particularly to the major churches of the capital such as the Theotokos of Blachernai, near the Theodosian land wall, and Holy Apostles, with its imperial mausolea, about halfway between the palace and the wall. Participants in these events were dressed in special finery and carried insignia appropriate to their positions. The jewel-bedecked ceremonial dress of the Emperor was in effect the property of the state, used by successive emperors (Liutprand notes that the ceremonial garb worn by Nikephoros was made for his ancestors¹⁰) and kept in Hagia Sophia, under the supervision of the patriarch of Constantinople.¹¹ Similar, though less exalted, arrangements may have applied to the less expensive garb of humbler participants in the processions, whose costumes were probably, like carnival finery today, stored for use by a succession of wearers (however waspish, Liutprand's observation of poorly fitting outfits rings true).

What They Looked Like

Given the evident importance of visual impressiveness to the Byzantine court and its ceremonial, it is not unreasonable to look to the surviving material culture of the empire for endorsement and perhaps augmentation of the written evidence. Survivals of material specifically associated with court ceremonial are, however, virtually non-existent. This is no surprise in the case of the highly perishable wall hangings, banners, and costumes, which have naturally been dust for centuries, but it applies also to most of the buildings, squares, and other public areas of Constantinople where ceremonial took place. These remain, if at all, only as scant and often problematic archaeological fragments. The imperial palace itself, for instance, at the tip of the promontory of Constantinople, was a complex of buildings enclosed by a wall: this is known from references in a variety of sources to the building of particular components, or their repair and redecoration, throughout the Byzantine period.¹² Excavation of the palace area in the 1930s, however, revealed just relatively small sections of mosaic floors and a few other structures, most of which could be related only to early Byzantine phases.¹³ Not even this much remains of many of the famous churches that were the destinations or

¹⁰ Liutprand, *Embassay to Constantinople*, trans. by Wright, ed. by Norwich, p. 181 (= *Embassy*, ch. 9).

¹¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus: *De administrando imperio*, ed. by Gy. Moravcsik, trans. by R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), p. 67.

¹² R. Guillard, *Etudes de topographie de Constantinople byzantine*, 2 vols in 1 pt (Amsterdam, 1969), vol. I.

¹³ For bibliography, see *ODB*, II, 870.

stopping points of processions: Holy Apostles, for example, was demolished to make way for the mosque-complex of Mehmet the Conqueror.

The contribution of Byzantine art to an understanding of the court and its ceremonial is, therefore, oblique rather than direct, consisting of material of three kinds: first, there are some representations of ceremonial events; secondly, there are depictions of ceremonial dress, but in formal, rather than narrative compositions; thirdly, there are objects that may be linked with the court in some way, and so provide some insight as to the tastes of the Byzantine ruling class.

There are in fact very few examples in the first of these categories, the depiction of ceremonial. The vigorous Roman tradition of representing the history and formalities of empire on major works of public art does seem to have continued throughout the Byzantine period, but in modified form, perhaps because the skills required to produce its main vehicle, monumental stone sculpture, were all but lost by the sixth century.¹⁴ Vestiges of this tradition are present in a late-fourth-century relief-carved base made for Theodosius I to support an Egyptian obelisk set up in the hippodrome of Constantinople, which shows the Emperor attending the spectacle accompanied by family and guards; tiers around the royal box house less exalted spectators, musicians, and dancers.¹⁵ Hippodrome scenes with similar content painted in the south-west tower of St Sophia in Kiev (1113–25)¹⁶ attest the continued use of such imagery into the middle-Byzantine period, since the work in Kiev must have been based on Byzantine models,¹⁷ but no example from within the empire survives. On a miniature scale, a sixth-century ivory panel in Trier shows a procession taking relics to a newly built church: two clerics in an open carriage drawn by mules carry a reliquary casket; before them is a group of men on foot, dressed in tunics and cloaks, who approach the church, where a figure in imperial dress greets them.¹⁸ The chief middle-Byzantine source of such imagery is a unique mid-twelfth-century illustrated copy of the Chronicle of the eleventh-century historian John Skylitzes, now in Madrid.¹⁹ This has 574 miniatures providing rich

¹⁴ Possibly this happened because the decline of paganism so much reduced the demand for figure sculpture that artisans and workshops turned to other media. For most of the Byzantine period stone carving is limited to simple relief ornamentation of architectural elements: L. Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 146–51.

¹⁵ A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople (IVe–Xe siècle)* (Paris, 1963), pp. 25–28.

¹⁶ A. Grabar, ‘Les fresques des escaliers à Sainte-Sophia de Kiev et l’iconographie impériale byzantine’, *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, 7 (1935), 103–17.

¹⁷ V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics* (London, 1966), pp. 31–32.

¹⁸ C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff, *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 2 vols (Mainz, 1999), II, 519–21.

¹⁹ Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2. The manuscript was probably made in Sicily and may owe its form to western, rather than Byzantine tradition. I. Ševčenko,

illustration of events of the period 811 to 1057: emperors are acclaimed, crowned, married, baptized, and carried to burial; they also visit the churches of Constantinople in procession (fig. 39), attend spectacles at the hippodrome, and enter the city in triumph after victories.²⁰ Finally, a few miniatures in a twelfth-century *Epithalamium* manuscript give a rare glimpse of the ceremonial life of women of the court.²¹ They show the arrival of a western princess in Constantinople for her marriage to the emperor's son: before entering the city, the princess is greeted by Byzantine ladies sent out to meet her, attired in the Byzantine imperial dress they have brought with them, and enthroned to receive their compliments; she also has an audience with her future sister-in-law, the emperor's daughter.

Compelling though they are, especially given their rarity in Byzantine art, all these images are necessarily schematic: processions are indicated by a handful of figures, grand buildings become huts, the spoils of war are carried on a single waggon,²² and two princesses huddle in a tent barely large enough to contain them. Details of costume and regalia are similarly condensed and simplified, so that, for example, in the Madrid Skylitzes the various ethnic groups are identified throughout principally by conventions of headdress: Arabs of the east wear a turban of loose, large folds; those of north Africa have closer-fitting headwear, extending below the chin; Russians have pointed hats, Byzantine courtiers wear large white bonnets of various shapes.²³ All these images, then, offer visual summaries of the events they depict, seldom extending what is known from documentary sources.

Rather more may be derived from my second category of evidence, the representation of ceremonial costume in images that do not represent actual ceremonial at all, a description that embraces the relatively large number of surviving images of middle- and late-Byzantine emperors, in mosaics and wall paintings, on ivory panels, enamels, metalwork, and in manuscript illumination.²⁴ Typically, these show the emperor, sometimes with empress and children, in a formal grouping with a divine figure (usually Christ or the Virgin, occasionally angels and saints). The images are, therefore,

'The Madrid Manuscript of the Chronicle of Skylitzes in the Light of its New Dating', in *Byzanz und der Westen*, ed. by I. Hutter (Vienna, 1984), pp. 117–30.

²⁰ See A. Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid* (Venice, 1979), for illustrations.

²¹ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 1851. The manuscript contains a poem written to celebrate the marriage: I. Spatarakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 210–30, figs 158–73.

²² Examples in the Madrid Skylitzes: 210^v, procession to the Blachernai church to pray for the end of drought; 172^v, John Tzimisces in triumph (Grabar and Manoussacas, *Manuscrit de Skylitzès*, figs 246 and 221).

²³ Examples, in the order given, are found on folios 47^v, 111^v, 170^v, and 42^v.

²⁴ A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936).



Fig. 39. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. Matritensis gr. Vitr. 26-2, fol. 210v.

Madrid Skylitzes: Procession to Blachernai from the palace.

Photo by kind permission of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

statements of the perceived imperial relationship with God,²⁵ rather than representations of what was actually seen at court, but they nevertheless provide many views of imperial costume which may be set alongside the documentary record of its history and appearance. For example, the fine mosaic image of the early-tenth-century emperor Alexander in the north gallery of Hagia Sophia (fig. 40)²⁶ shows this rather lamentable ruler wearing items of middle-Byzantine ceremonial costume that tally with details given in the *De Ceremoniis*.²⁷ Alexander wears the *sagion*, a tunic with decorated hem and cuffs, and also the *skaramangion*, a purple over-garment, and the *loros*, a heavily jewel-encrusted stole, which wraps around the body. Moreover, the mosaic is sufficiently precise in its details to demonstrate the manner in which the *loros* was worn: one end fell straight in front of the body, almost to the feet, while the other passed over the right shoulder, returning to the front below the right arm, crossing the body to the left shoulder, returning once more to below the right arm, then passing across the front of the body to be draped over the left arm (fig. 41). The image thus supplies more information than the texts, which do not explain how this cumbersome garment was to be managed.

²⁵ H. Maguire, 'The Heavenly Court', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 247–58.

²⁶ P. A. Underwood and E. J. W. Hawkins, 'The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul: The Portrait of the Emperor Alexander', *DOP*, 15 (1961), 189–215.

²⁷ *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète: Le Livre des Cérémonies*, ed. by A. Vogt, 2 vols (Paris, 1967), I, 175.



Fig. 40. Alexander mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople.
(photo, L. Rodley)

The evidence from art also expands upon documentary indications of change to the imperial vestments from time to time. The ‘wrapping’ *loros* worn by Alexander is found in other imperial images of the ninth and early tenth centuries, such as those of Basil I and his immediate family in the Paris Gregory manuscript,²⁸ Leo VI on an ivory finial in Berlin,²⁹ and Constantine VII on an ivory panel in Moscow (fig. 42),³⁰ but is later superseded by a different design, seen in the mosaic of Constantine IX and Zoe in the south gallery of Hagia Sophia (made after 1028 and altered at intervals to c. 1055:

²⁸ This is a luxurious edition of the *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos*, now in Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS gr. 510). L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1999), figs 2 and 5.

²⁹ *Glory of Byzantium*, ed. by H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom (New York, 1997), cat. no. 138.

³⁰ *Glory of Byzantium*, ed. by Evans and Wixom, cat. no. 140.

fig. 43).³¹ Here, emperor and empress each wear a *loros* apparently made up as a kind of pinafore, with an opening for the head in the middle of a yoke which rests on the shoulders, from which fall front and back panels, the latter being brought round to the front below the right arm and draped across to hang over the left arm, as in the 'wrapping' type. The 'yoke' *loros* is found in other images of Constantine IX, such as that on one of several enamelled panels in Budapest known as the Monomachos crown,³² and in most imperial images beyond this date, for example that of Alexios I Komnenos in the *Panoplia dogmatica*, Vat. gr. 666,³³ and the mosaic panel of his son, John II Komnenos, with his empress, Eirene, also in the south gallery of Hagia Sophia and set up c. 1122.³⁴ It would seem, therefore, that the change of *loros* style in imagery was not just a matter of artistic licence, but truly reflects a change of style in the garment. That there should have been such a change is consistent with practicalities: the 'wrapping' *loros* must have been very difficult to manage, especially while moving. It may have been held in place by ties or pins of some sort, but its weight

would probably have caused these to tear the lighter garments to which they were attached. The 'yoke' design, though probably equally heavy, would spread the weight evenly and could not slip off the shoulders.

Exactly when the change took place is unclear. The earliest appearance of the 'yoke' form in surviving monumental art appears to be in the painted image of Nikephoros Phokas (963–69) on the wall of a Cappadocian cave church (fig. 44).³⁵ While this austere and thoroughly practical man was just the type to demand a more sensible design



Fig. 41. The manner of wrapping a *loros*. (drawing, L. Rodley)

³¹ T. Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul: Third Preliminary Report: The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* (Boston 1942), pl. III. Disturbance of the tesserae suggests that this panel was changed whenever Empress Zoe changed husbands; the heads alone were altered, however, so the imperial costume depicted dates from 1028 or soon after.

³² *Glory of Byzantium*, ed. by Evans and Wixom, cat. no. 145.

³³ *Oriente Cristiano e Santità*, ed. by S. Gentile (Venice, 1998), cat. no. 24.

³⁴ Whittemore, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia*, pl. xx.

³⁵ L. Rodley, 'The Pigeon House Church at Çavuşin', *JÖB*, 33 (1983), 301–33 (p. 309).



Fig. 42. Constantine VII, ivory panel (Pushkin Museum, Moscow).

so it is not impossible that for a time both forms were used, the old style eventually abandoned because the new one was more convenient.

This excursion raises the question of accuracy in the representation of ceremonial dress, of course. The above analysis assumes that artists within the orbit of the court of Constantinople, and usually working for imperial patrons, would generally have been accurate as to the form of dress depicted, even though they may have had to simplify it,

³⁶ C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453: Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series*, ed. by H. W. Janson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), p. 207 (= Theophanes Continuatus, ed. by I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 447.15).

³⁷ Constantine was six at the death of his father Leo VI in 912; he therefore shared the throne first with Alexander (to 913) and then Romanos I.

³⁸ *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whitemore Collection*, ed. by P. Grierson and A. R. Bellinger, 3 vols (Washington, DC, 1966–73), III, pt 2, pl. xxxvi.

³⁹ *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins*, ed. by Grierson and Bellinger, III, pt 2, pl. xxxii.

for the *loros*, the evidence of Byzantine coins suggests that the new form appeared earlier (and, according to Liutprand, Nikephoros wore vestments 'made for his ancestors'). Constantine VII, the commissioner of *De Ceremoniis*, and enthusiastic user of palace automata, is an equally likely candidate and is actually said to have renewed items of ceremonial dress that had long been damaged.³⁶ Indeed, the 'yoke' form appears on coins struck from 945 when he became sole emperor,³⁷ replacing the 'wrapping' form used on his earlier coins.³⁸ However, on the Moscow ivory, which shows Constantine as a mature, even elderly figure, he is wearing the old-style 'wrapping' *loros*, which seems unlikely had he been responsible for the new design. What is more, the 'yoke' type may even appear on coin portraits of Basil I (867–86)³⁹—but the small scale and high degree of stylization used for such images makes this uncertain. All that can safely be said, therefore, is that the change of *loros* style happened at some point between the late ninth and mid-tenth centuries. There must always have been more than one set of imperial regalia, to cater for ceremonial occasions when co-emperors appeared together.



Fig. 43. Zoe mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. (photo, L. Rodley)

according to the limitations of the media used. Those further removed from the centre were unlikely to have had first-hand familiarity with ceremonial garments and will have been dependent upon models supplied by other representations—on ivories or metal-work, in manuscript illumination, or in model books.⁴⁰ Such was probably the case of the artist who painted Nikephoros in the Cappadocian cave church, and the fact that he painted a ‘yoke’ *loros* makes it all the more likely that, by this time (963) this was already the form in regular use. In other instances, the use of a ‘second hand’ model for ceremonial dress may account for apparent anachronism: a mosaic panel in the Martorana church in Palermo, showing Roger II of Sicily in Byzantine imperial dress

⁴⁰ By ‘model book’ is meant a collection of drawings of existing works, built up by an artist or workshop, possibly over a long period of time, to furnish examples that could be copied or modified for new work. No Byzantine example of a model book survives, but widespread artistic practice in medieval (and later) times makes it very likely that they did exist. For bibliography see, *ODB*, II, 1386–87.



Fig. 44. Nikephoros II Phokas, in the Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin, Cappadocia. (photo, L. Rodley)

and datable to *c.* 1143, has him wearing a ‘wrapping’ *loros* nearly two centuries after it went out of style.⁴¹ The probable explanation here is that an artist in Sicily (whether a travelling Byzantine or a local) used an old model and had no first-hand acquaintance with Byzantine ceremonial dress with which to correct it. Similarly, in the schematizations of the Madrid *Skylitzes*, also probably a product of Sicily, both *loros* types appear, sometimes worn by the same emperor,⁴² suggesting that the artists of this heavily illustrated book had available to them two conventions for imperial dress and used them indiscriminately.

Turning to a second important component of ceremonial dress, the crown represented in the Alexander mosaic has the form of a jewelled band, with a small cross at the front and strings of pearls or jewels falling to shoulder level either side of the face. Similar crowns are seen in other imperial images noted above: Basil I (Paris *Gregory*), Leo VI (Berlin ivory), Constantine VII (Moscow ivory; fig. 42) and Constantine IX (Zoe panel; fig. 43). There is also an actual example of this item, albeit a crown made for export rather than for wear by a Byzantine emperor. The ‘holy crown of Hungary’ (fig. 45) was apparently made at the behest of Michael VII Doukas, for Geza I of Hungary (1074–77), since its enamels bear images of both these rulers, as well as Michael’s son and co-emperor Constantine.⁴³ Once the bands across the crown are

⁴¹ E. Kitzinger, *The Mosaics of St Mary’s of the Admiral in Palermo* (Washington, DC, 1990), p. 192.

⁴² For example, Theophilus wears the ‘wrapping’ *loros* on fol. 47 and the ‘yoke’ type on fol. 52: Grabar and Manoussacas, *Manuscrit de Skylitzès*, figs 41, and 53.

⁴³ P. J. Kelleher, *The Holy Crown of Hungary* (Rome, 1951); and E. Kovács and Z. Lovag, *The Hungarian Crown and Other Regalia* (Budapest, 1980).

discounted (these are later additions) this crown has essentially the same form as that shown in the images noted, apart from the triangular and rounded 'fish scale' panels on the front upper rim. (These do, however, resemble components of the crowns worn by Empresses Zoe and Eirene in the imperial panels of the south gallery of Hagia Sophia.)

John II in the Hagia Sophia panel wears a crown similar to the earlier ones, but apparently with a solid cap above the headband, as does his son, Alexios, depicted on the adjacent pier,⁴⁴ and the same feature is seen in representations of John and Alexios in a gospel book made for John.⁴⁵ This 'closed' form much resembles the description of the imperial crown given by Anna Komnena, the sister of John II, who says it was: 'shaped like a half-sphere, fitting the head closely; on either side of the temples clusters of pearls and precious stones hung down, lightly touching the cheeks'.⁴⁶ Alexios I in Vat. gr. 666, noted above, also seems to have a crown of this form, and so does the emperor depicted in a *Homilies of John Chrysostom* of c. 1071–81.⁴⁷ It would appear, therefore, that a new form of imperial crown came into

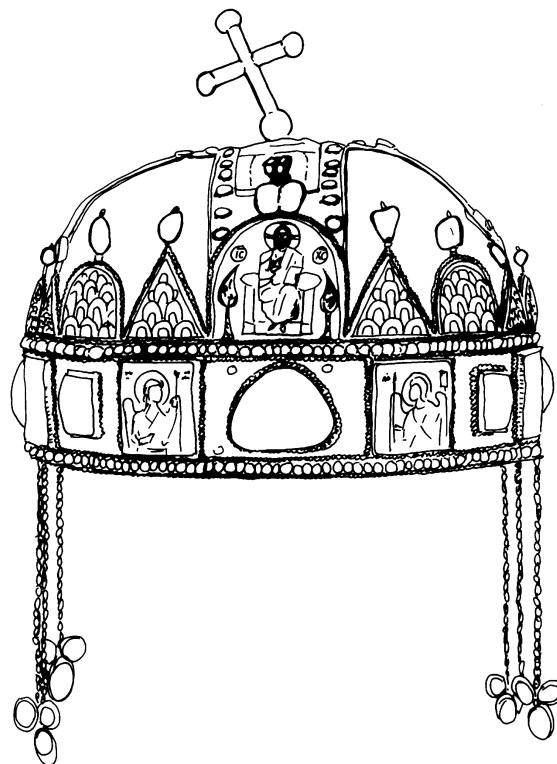


Fig. 45. The Holy Crown of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest). (drawing, L. Rodley)

⁴⁴ Whittemore, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia*, pl. xxxiii.

⁴⁵ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Urb. gr. 2. *Glory of Byzantium*, ed. by Evans and Wixom, cat. no. 144.

⁴⁶ *Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. by Sewter, p. 111 (= *Alexiad* III. iv).

⁴⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Coislin 79. *Glory of Byzantium*, ed. by Evans and Wixom, cat. no. 143. It seems that the miniature was originally intended to represent Michael VII, but was then used for his successor, Nikephoros III Botaneiates.

use in the third quarter of the eleventh century, after Constantine IX and by the time of Nikephoros III.⁴⁸

What Their Tastes Were

Finally, it should be possible to arrive at some notion of the tastes of the Byzantine court by scrutiny of those objects that may be associated with it because they bear imperial or aristocratic images or inscriptions. (It is not always clear whether an object thus embellished was the commission of the person named or a gift to him/her, but this does not affect their status as indicators of prevailing courtly taste.) As is often observed, most of these objects are lavishly decorated. Two chalices in the treasury of San Marco in Venice, for example, which bear inscriptions naming the emperor Romanos (probably Romanos II, 959–63) are each made with a bowl of semi-precious stone on a silver-gilt mount decorated with enamels, pearls, and jewels.⁴⁹ A magnificent reliquary of the True Cross now in Limburg embodies two stages of court patronage: it began with a silver casing for the relic, decorated with large pearls and inscribed as the commission of emperors Constantine and Romanos (probably Constantine VII and his son Romanos II, so 948–59).⁵⁰ A few years later the relic thus housed was set into the central compartment of a large rectangular case containing other relics, and even more lavishly decorated with enamels, jewels, and pearls (fig. 46). An inscription on the rim of the case credits this second phase to a highly-placed courtier, Basil the *proedros*, an illegitimate son of Romanos I.⁵¹ Also made for this man were a chalice and paten now in the treasury of San Marco which, like the Romanos chalices, combine metalwork and semi-precious stone.⁵² All these objects certainly indicate a taste for visual splendour which sits easily with the extraordinary ‘special effects’ of the throne room described

⁴⁸ Of potential relevance to narrowing this bracket is an ivory panel in Paris, showing an imperial couple ‘Romanos’ and ‘Eudokia’ variously assigned to Romanos II (945–49) and Romanos IV (1068–71), who both had empresses named Eudokia. I favour the latter, following the arguments of I. Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, ‘Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory’, *DOP*, 31 (1977), 307–25, especially since the emperor wears a ‘yoke’ *loros*. Unfortunately, however, the degree of schematization makes it unclear as to whether the crown is open or closed. For bibliography, see *Splendeur de Byzance*, ed. by J. Lafontaine-Dosogne (Brussels, 1982), cat. IV. 7.

⁴⁹ *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice*, ed. by D. Buckton (Milan, 1984), cat. nos. 10 and 11.

⁵⁰ J. M. Wilm, ed., ‘Die Limburger Staurothek’, *Das Münster*, 8 (1955), 201–40; and W. Michel, ‘Die inschriften der Limburger Staurothek’, *Archiv für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 28 (1976), 23–43.

⁵¹ Basil acquired his title from Nikephoros Phokas in 963: G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford, 1980), p. 285.

⁵² M. Ross, ‘Basil the Proedros’, *Archaeology*, 11 (1958), 271–75.



Fig. 46. Limburg reliquary (Cathedral treasury, Limburg, Hessen).

by Liutprand and, it has been argued, with the cultural proclivities of many other courts of the near east of the period.⁵³

Objects of the kind just described are 'public' objects, in the sense that they are made to be seen as evidence of the piety, wealth, and generosity of the patron, so it is perhaps unsurprising that they should be both obvious and uniform in their splendour. On the other hand, illuminated manuscripts are more 'private' and so perhaps take us closer to assessing the tastes of the individuals they were made for. The Paris Gregory, mentioned above, is a copy of the *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos* made for Basil I between 879 and 882. The book has forty-six miniatures that not only are of high quality workmanship, but also have an intricate relationship with the text, going well beyond simple illustration of Gregory's sermons.⁵⁴ A scheme of such complexity must have been designed by someone possessed of both creativity and theological scholarship, who then instructed the artist or artists as to the images and layout required, conditions that make the patriarch Photios the most likely candidate.⁵⁵ Such a book well fits the context of the scholarly revival of the second half of the ninth century,⁵⁶ and the personality of Basil I, a usurper of lowly origins who, as his *Vita* declares, nevertheless valued education and saw to it that his children, female as well as male, were literate. He even installed mosaics in the imperial palace which showed these offspring carrying books.⁵⁷ At the other end of the spectrum, a *Menologion* made for Basil II (976–1025) is simplicity itself in terms of content, and would appear to reflect the tastes of Basil II, who, we are told by the historian Michael Psellus, was scornful of intellectuals.⁵⁸ The book is a descriptive ecclesiastical calendar, giving information about the saints and liturgical feasts to be celebrated throughout the year. It has over four hundred pages, half of each taken up with a miniature.⁵⁹ It is certainly a luxurious work, therefore, with illumination requiring the toil of eight artists,⁶⁰ but it has none of the subtlety of the Paris Gregory. The saints due to be celebrated are depicted in a pedestrian manner, making repeated use of a small number of iconographical types for portraits, martyrdoms, or miracles: among

⁵³ O. Grabar, 'The Shared Culture of Objects', in *Byzantine Court Culture*, ed. by Maguire, pp. 115–29.

⁵⁴ Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*.

⁵⁵ Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, pp. 201–38 and 412–14.

⁵⁶ A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 2 vols (Madison, WI, 1973), I, 361–74.

⁵⁷ Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 198 (= *Vita Basili*, in Theophanes Continuatus Book V.89, ed. by I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 333.21).

⁵⁸ Fourteen Byzantine Rulers, *The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. by E. R. A. Sewter (Harmondsworth, 1966), pp. 44–45.

⁵⁹ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 1613. The text covers the first half of the ecclesiastical year, September through February, so there was probably a second volume for the rest of the year. The Vatican manuscript may be a copy of the original.

⁶⁰ I. Ševčenko, 'The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II', *DOP*, 16 (1962), 245–76.

the 250-odd martyrdoms, for instance, a ‘standard decapitation’ scene appears often, and in over eighty cases the saint is depicted simply standing in front of conventional architecture.⁶¹

The poor survival rate of Byzantine material probably accounts for the fact that we have no grand illuminated manuscript that can be definitely associated with Constantine VII, even though he is the middle-Byzantine ruler most credited with an interest in the arts—even to the extent of offering advice to artists and artisans.⁶² His interests may be reflected, however, in a group of works to which has been attached the notion of a ‘Macedonian Renaissance’.⁶³ At the core of this group are three illuminated manuscripts, known as the Paris Psalter, the Bible of Leo, and the Joshua Roll,⁶⁴ which, although certainly not the work of a single artist, have sufficiently close links of iconography and style to suggest a general common provenance, in the sense of being produced by artists working in the capital during the second quarter of the tenth century. The anchor for this group (admittedly not as weighty as one might wish) is the Bible of Leo, which is identified by patron imagery and inscriptions as the commission of one Leo the *sakellarios*, probably active around the mid-tenth century.⁶⁵ The common feature of illuminations in all three manuscripts is their ‘classicizing’ style (characterized by three-dimensional treatment of architectural and landscape settings, and by figures drawn in attitudes recalling the conventions of Greek, and particularly Roman art). They also use the classical device of personification, for both geographical features (such as rivers, towns, and hills) and concepts (such as Wisdom and Prophecy in the author portrait of the Paris Psalter). This group of material may be expanded to include several more illuminated manuscripts⁶⁶ and a number of objects of the minor arts, which share the classicizing components to some degree. Chief among these are ivory boxes decorated with subjects derived ultimately from classical mythology, such as the Veroli

⁶¹ *Oriente Cristiano e Santità*, ed. by Gentile, cat. no. 6.

⁶² Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 208 (= Theophanes Continuatus, ed. by I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 447.22).

⁶³ ‘Macedonian’ after the name of the dynasty founded by Basil I and ending with Zoe. K. Weitzmann, ‘The Character and Intellectual Origins of the Macedonian Renaissance’, in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. by H. Kessler (Chicago, 1971), 176–223.

⁶⁴ A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), pp. 63–71; T. Mathews, ‘The Epigrams of Leo Sacellarios and an Exegetical Approach to the Miniatures of Vat. Reg. Gr. 1’, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 43 (1977), 94–133; and K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll: A Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1948).

⁶⁵ C. Mango, ‘The Date of Cod. Vat. Reg. Gr. 1 and the “Macedonian Renaissance”’, *AIRN*, 4 (1969), 121–26.

⁶⁶ K. Weitzmann, ‘The Classical Heritage in the Art of Constantinople’, in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. by Kessler, pp. 126–50.



Fig. 47. Glass bowl (Treasury of San Marco, Venice).

Casket⁶⁷ and a glass bowl in the treasury of San Marco,⁶⁸ which is decorated with classical figure groups in roundels (fig. 47).

When historians of Byzantine art are accused of building houses of cards, it is this material that is often cited as the damning evidence. None of these works can be unassailably attached to a precise date, nor even be placed with absolute certainty within the orbit of the court, except perhaps for the Bible of Leo, which was made for a *sakellarios*. Nevertheless, as in some famous trials, the cumulative circumstantial evidence is compelling, and in this case would appear to at least support the verdict that there was enthusiasm for classical motifs among the aristocracy of Constantinople around the mid-tenth century. The production of works with such self-consciously classicizing components as those just noted supposes the existence of collections of late Roman (or earlier) objects in court circles, probably in the form of silverware, carved gems, and cameos, which would have provided the models. (Indeed, the bowls of several of the chalices mentioned above are actually late antique pieces re-used.⁶⁹) More considerable remains of classical antiquity, in the form of the statues that had been set up to embellish Constantinople in the fourth century,⁷⁰ were still standing in the middle-Byzantine

⁶⁷ J. Beckwith, *The Veroli Casket* (London, 1962).

⁶⁸ *San Marco*, ed. by Buckton, cat. no. 21. A. Cutler, 'The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice', in his *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art*, IX (Variorum, 1992).

⁶⁹ This is the case in both the chalices of Romanos, and the chalice of Sisinnios (*San Marco*, ed. by Buckton, cat. nos 10, 11, and 23).

⁷⁰ *Chronicon Paschale*, trans. by M. Whitby and M. Whitby (Liverpool, 1989), p. 16 (= *Chron. Paschale* I, 527–28).

period, for they are mentioned in an eighth-century description of the city,⁷¹ and many were still present until the sack by Crusaders in 1204.⁷² While most of the population of the capital ignored these relics of an earlier age, the owners of the antique silver and gem collections may have had some awareness of their origins and significance: Constantine VII himself ordered the collection of some of the city's statues to furnish a new garden in the palace.⁷³

This evidence does not, however, support the case for a classical revival of any depth in the visual arts of tenth-century Byzantium and most scholars reject the term 'Renaissance'. The personifications of the manuscripts may be boiled down to a handful of conventional types,⁷⁴ the figures on the San Marco glass bowl have no coherent programme, nor firmly identifiable subjects,⁷⁵ and the pudgy cherubs on the Veroli Casket would dismay any real connoisseur of the antique. It is probably best, therefore, to see the use of devices and motifs derived from the antique as a matter of court fashion, much as were the eighteenth-century drawing-room tables with legs made like Doric columns. Such an analysis also removes the difficulty of reconciling a serious classical revival with the gem-laden metalwork and the antics of the throne room. But perhaps this was never really necessary: for Constantine VII to have enjoyed dressing up and playing with the machinery of the Magnaura at some times and immersing himself in scholarship at others is no stranger than the perennial juxtaposition of some Senior Common Room indulgences with the sobriety of the library.

⁷¹ A. Cameron and J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 48–51.

⁷² D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 371–72 (= *Niketas Choniates, Historia*, ed. by I. Van Dieten (Berlin, 1975), pp. 647–51)

⁷³ Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 207 (= Theophanes Continuatus, ed. by I. Bekker, CSHB (Bonn, 1838), 447.15).

⁷⁴ C. Mango, 'Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder', *DOP*, 17 (1963), 53–75 (pp. 73–74).

⁷⁵ I. Kalavresou-Maxeiner, 'The Cup of San Marco and the "Classical" in Byzantium', in *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800–1250: Festschrift für Florentine Mütterich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. by K. Bierbrauer, P. K. Klein, and W. Sauerländer (Munich, 1985), pp. 167–74.

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